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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

CALLS

OF

USEFULNESS.

I have called in my way, on the grave and the gay,
The timid, the froward, and free,
The feeble and strong, the old and the young:
And now I would call upon thee.

REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.

1874
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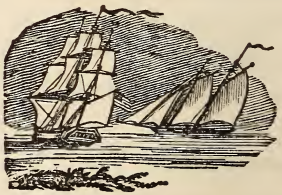

CALLS OF USEFULNESS.

A CALL ON A CLEAN INDUSTRIOUS HOUSE-KEEPER.

How do you do, Mary? How do you do? Hard at work, as usual, I see; never letting the grass grow under your feet. In my customary calls I have gone into many habitations, and this I will say, that no one have I yet entered which equals yours in tidiness. It does me good to see with what order and cleanliness every thing is arranged; and I heartily wish that all the slatterns

in town would take a peep at your palace, and follow your example. That shelf is a perfect picture ; any one might dine without a dish from this table, and the floor is as clean as a scrubbing brush can make it. If your husband were not an orderly and industrious man, I should be ashamed of him.

Your clock, there, keeps ticking away, and reminds me that I have no time to spare. Mine are hasty visits ; if they were not, I could never see half the people that I have to visit. How precious are moments, and how thriftily we should spend them ! We usually take the sound of the clock to be Tick, tack, tick, tack ; but a friend of mine says it is, Here, past ! here, past ! and, as every moment thus marked by the pendulum is gone for ever, it has a solemn signification.

Mind, Mary, that you do not run into the error of paying *great* attention to your house, and *little* attention to eternal things : God requires the hearts of his creatures. I have known those who, because they have discharged some duties well, have been satisfied in allowing others to remain undone. Cleanliness is an excellent quality, but cleanliness is not godliness. Perhaps you may remember what the Redeemer said of the Pharisees : " Ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter ; but your inward part is

full of ravening and wickedness."* Have a care, Mary! have a care! It is delightful to peep into such a house as yours; but as we are not to live in this world for ever, you must look forward to "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We must die as well as live; and it is a blessed thing to die in peace. "The reason why many Christians, at the hour of death, are full of doubts and fears, is this, because, in their lifetime, they have not been much exercised in living by faith in the Redeemer." This faith will make your comfortable cottage still more comfortable. Seek it, Mary, seek it, with all your heart, and with all your soul.

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* Luke xi. 39.

A CALL ON AN UNTIDY WOMAN.

This will never do, Molly! Three times have I called upon you, and every time your house has made me think of a pig's sty. Just look at those chairs; they cannot have been rubbed for a week; and see here! I could write my name on this table with my finger, it is so thickly covered with dust. It will never do to go on in this manner; there can be no comfort where things are so unclean, neither for yourself, your husband, nor your children.

Molly. Ay, it is easy enough for those to talk who have, perhaps, people to help them, and money to buy soap, brushes and brooms; but poor folks must do as well as they can. It is as much as I can do to get a bit to eat and a drop to drink for my children and myself; for my husband does but little to help me. If he comes

home at night, he soon bounces out again, and sets off to the tavern.

Visitor. He cannot well do a worse thing, Molly; but are you quite sure that you do not persuade him to go there?

Molly. Me persuade him! No, indeed; I take care to scold him well for it, every day of his life, I do.

Visitor. Yes; but the reason why he goes to the tavern is, perhaps, because he is happier there than he is at home. Now, an untidy house, and a scolding wife, are two things as likely as any that I know of, to persuade a man to go somewhere else. Come, Molly! try a different plan with your husband; let him see that some attention is paid to him; let him know that his comforts are considered; and let him look on his wife and his children without feeling angry at the one, or ashamed of the other. You may do wonders if you will, Molly; Be advised! Be advised!

Molly. If I was to work like a slave, my husband would take no notice of it at all; he would leave me to scrub my finger ends off, so that he could go down to the tavern, and set his back against the chimney corner, with a glass of whiskey before him. He cares no more for me than he does for that broken platter.

Visitor. Do not say so, Molly, do not say so;

give him a kind word instead of rating him; stir up the fire, and sweep up the hearth; and if you do not make a different man of him in a month, I shall say that it is his fault, and not yours. Few men are too bad to be mended; and you may take my word for it, that the best way to keep a man from the public-house, is to let him have a more comfortable place at home. I shall leave a little book with you that contains a few good hints, and I do not despair of seeing you and your husband reading it together, some night after he comes home from his work, in quietness and peace. Time is rolling on apace, Molly; the trees are either felled, or now growing, that will form our coffins, and which ever goes first to the grave—you, or your husband—the one that is left will feel sorrow for having given grief to the other. Take what I have said in good part; and may grace, mercy, and peace yet dwell in your habitation.

A CALL ON A SABBATH IDLER.

WHAT! Donald Macpherson, neither shaved nor cleaned, though it is near two o'clock! The Sabbath bells have rung in your ears, and several places of worship have been open around you, yet here you are, idly lounging about in your dirty clothes, reading a newspaper, neglecting your own soul, and forsaking the worship of Almighty God. Donald, if I could do you a kindness I would, but be persuaded to do one for yourself. Do "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,"* for Sabbaths are precious days. Have you never heard that "time is the stuff that life is made of," and can you be sure that another Sab-

* Exod. xx. 8.

bath will be yours? Do not be content to go idling along to perdition; have pity upon yourself—

> For he who scorns the day of rest,
> Regardless of his soul,
> Will shortly hear the trumpet sound,
> While winged lightnings flash around,
> And thunders loudly roll.

A Scotchman should bear in mind what has been done by his countrymen. The old covenanters of Scotland, in the midst of danger and death, bent their knees and lifted up their hearts to the God of their fathers, worshipping him in spirit and in truth. Ay, when surrounded by their enemies, persecuted and tormented; when wandering among mountains, and dens, and caves of the earth; when hunted like wild beasts, and slaughtered without mercy, they endured all, and would neither part with the word of God, nor neglect the worship of God. What would they have given, or rather what would they not have given, for the quiet Sabbaths which you appear to despise! When they assembled, it was in the dreary wilderness. Their church had no walls but the rugged cliffs, and no roof but the blue sky of heaven. They were compelled, even on the Lord's day, to hold their swords in their hands, while they engaged in prayer and praise; for their hard-hearted

and bloody-handed enemies were hovering about them; and the watchful sentinel was stationed on the lofty crag, to give timely warning of their approach. These covenanters would have died, rather than have forsaken the assembling of themselves together on the Sabbath-day!

Donald, awake from your guilty slumber, and think on what I am telling you; when the preacher, the gray-headed covenanter, with his hands uplifted, his hair wavering in the winds, and his eye fixed on heaven, raised his voice in the silence of the solitary place, the whole congregation listened as with one heart and soul to catch the tidings of salvation that fell from his lips. And why did they listen so attentively? Why?—because the love of God, and the grace of the Redeemer, were dearer to them than life; they loved the sound of the gospel of Christ more than they feared the furious blood-thirsty dragoons, whose horses' hoofs came rattling in their ears. O Donald! if you were half as earnest as these covenanters in seeking salvation, you would not need to be told to "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy."*

* Exod. xx. 8.

A CALL ON PARENTS ANXIOUS FOR THE GOOD OF THEIR CHILDREN.

I HAVE just stepped in to tell you how pleased I am with the punctual, orderly, diligent, and obedient conduct of your children at the Sunday-school. I know that you are anxious about their welfare, temporal and spiritual; and you have every reason to be encouraged in your exertions for their welfare.

When even the poorest people bring up their children in the fear of the Lord, they find them their best friends in after-days; but when parents, (rich or poor,) neglect their children, and bring them up ignorant of God and of Divine things, such children are sure to be plagues to them. So far from honouring their parents, and proving a

comfort to them, they are as dust in their eyes, thorns in their feet, and goads in their sides.

Train up your plants in faith and love,
Let truth divine be given,
And they shall freshly bloom on earth,
And blossom bright in heaven.

There is every encouragement to persevere. A vine that is left wild presents but a sorry appearance; but when properly cultured, how beautiful its clusters appear! "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he he will not depart from it."*

Many parents desire to leave their children well provided for; but after all, there is no richer legacy than an example of piety. For a child to be able to say, "My father and mother were sincere and simple-hearted disciples of Jesus Christ," is better than to boast of their riches and prosperity. "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but he blesseth the habitation of the just."†

The children of pious parents are not always alive to the mercy of God, in giving them guides in their youth, in leading them from temptation, in delivering them from evil, and in directing their feet in the way of holiness; but in after-

* Prov. xxii. 6. † Prov. iii. 33.

years, these things fail not to come uppermost in their minds.

Be encouraged, then; for the promises of God are not confined to Christian parents. No; they reach to the children also. Our heavenly Father showeth mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments.* Wherever, then, you read the words of eternal life, doubt not the mercy of God to those who are to tread in your steps, when you have exchanged earth for heaven; and put up the prayer, "Lord, vouchsafe the spirit of revelation, take the scales from my eyes, that, as these are thy truths, so they may be profitable to me. Do thou graciously incline my soul, that in faith I may cast myself entirely upon thine infinite mercy in Christ Jesus."

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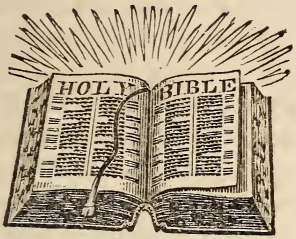
* Exod. xx. 6.

A CALL ON A DRAM DRINKER.

I HAVE a few papers to deliver "On Dram Drinking;" and perhaps you will let me leave one with you, as well as with your neighbours. It lies in a little compass, it speaks the truth without flattery, and will not take up five minutes of your time to read. The bitterest medicine often does the most good, and the sharpest language is frequently, in the end, the most friendly. Read it slowly, and ponder on every sentence it contains.

'DRAM DRINKING.'

Dram drinking makes man a monster, and renders him unfeeling to the mother's sigh, the orphan's tear, the widow's groan. Like the grave, it is always craving for more, and spares neither high nor low. Subtle as the serpent, it robs its victim of life, while it hugs him in its false embraces; it charms the senses, while it steals the soul. Cruel as the whirlpool, it hurries its misguided victim to an early grave, and dashes him to destruction, while he fancies he is taking a voyage of pleasure! It is found under every description of rank and character, from the palace to the cottage, and patronised by all orders and degrees. The poisonous cup is admitted, though it shuts out the best friends. Such are its fancied charms, and the baneful pleasure it affords, that every interest has been sacrificed, every tie abandoned, every duty neglected, every principle broken to gratify it. Such its deceit, that its victim smiles, and mistakes the message of death for the friendly welcome. Such its delusions, that while it affects to gladden the heart, it hastens on poverty, disgrace, ruin, disease, misery, and madness. The awful scene closes here, in death; but after that will come the judgment.



A CALL ON AN AGED SERVANT OF GOD.

HERE you are, Dorothy, digging in the unfathomable mine of God's holy word, for the precious things contained in the gospel of Christ. A good man has said, "God's people have sweet intercourse with him, even in their callings; when we look for comfort, we shall find it, either in ordinances, hearing, reading, or praying;" and I doubt not that you find this to be the case.

I have brought you a cake which I trust you will relish; a sprig of holly to stick in your window; and a text of Scripture to put in your heart—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*

Deborah. Thank you, sir; thank you. The cheerful sprig of holly is good, but the cake is still better, and may remind me, among God's

* Heb. xiii. 5.

especial mercies in Christ, of the bread of eternal life; and the text of Scripture is best of all, for it is a cordial to the fainting soul. Many a weary pilgrim has leaned on that staff, in journeying to the heavenly land. Come what will, "if God be for us, who can be against us? and if he be with us, we shall need no other comforter.

Visitor. When I call upon you, Dorothy, I always expect to take away something better than I bring. You are an aged servant of God; and we hope to reap a harvest of instruction from your Christian experience.

Deborah. God has mercifully prolonged my life, and preserved my faculties, so that I can still read, with the help of my glasses, of his grace to a sinful world, and ponder on his goodness to me in particular, in all my unworthiness; but as to instruction, you must not look to me for it. I often wonder what God preserves me for, for my infirmities make me a trouble to those around me; but he knows his own plans, and they are all holy, just, and good. I feel myself to be a good-for-nothing old woman.

Visitor. No, no! Dorothy, you are no good-for-nothing old woman. Those who, by dropping a word in season, preach the gospel of Christ in sincerity, are not useless.

Dorothy. I preach the gospel! O sir, you

have a mind to humble me indeed. I wish that I could with a loud voice tell the whole world of the mercy, long-suffering, and grace of my covenant Lord and God: but no; the ministers and stewards of God's holy word must preach his gospel.

Visitor. That is true, Dorothy; but, for some time past, I have observed the Christian graces which God has conferred on you; your gratitude to the Father of mercies; your love for Jesus Christ; and your desire for the influence of the Holy Spirit on your heart. Your humility, faith, and patience under affliction; your tenderness for your fellow-sinners; and your abiding dependence on "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And I rejoice to tell you, that the effects of Divine grace which the Lord has enabled you to manifest, have been made useful, by causing more than one or two thoughtless young persons to see the evil of their ways, and seek for pardon and peace in and through Christ Jesus.

Dorothy. You do indeed astonish me; but God's ways are not as our ways, and I know that he can make use of the unworthy to bring about the glorious promises of the gospel. All glory be to his grace! You have taught me a lesson; and, with Divine help, I will look less at

my infirmities, and more at the amazing condescension and grace of my Father and gracious Redeemer. And if I can do nothing else for my gracious Lord and Master, I will at least acknowledge his goodness, and bless and magnify his holy name.

Visitor. Grace, mercy, and peace rest upon you, and remain with you alway.

A CALL ON A YOUTH FOND OF WONDERFUL THINGS.

Here, Peter, is a tract for you. Judging by the books that you so often read, it is very clear that you are fond of wonders. Now I will tell you of three wonderful things.

1. When we think of the holiness of God, and consider that his eyes are too pure to behold

iniquity, it is wonderful that every sinful thought and wicked design of the human heart is not visited with immediate punishment, and the faculty of thinking rightly taken away from the offender.

2. It is wonderful that every wicked lie, every blaspheming oath, every rebellious denial of God, does not wither the tongue, and deprive it of the power of speech.

3. It is wonderful that every broken commandment, every guilty deed, does not, at once, overwhelm the sinner with confusion, and render him incapable of doing any thing; yet God bears with his offending creatures, and gives them a space for repentance. Among your wonderful things, Peter, do not forget the three wonders that I have pointed out to you.

A CALL ON A BLACKSMITH.

THAT is right, Willets, work away. I like to pass by your shop; for the roaring of the bellows, and the clanking of your hammer on the anvil, are pleasant music. They tell us, that something is going forward. Rather warm for you in the summer, to be sure; but, then, you have all the advantage in the winter, for while hundreds have to turn out, shivering amid frost and snow, pinched by the cold, and drenched by the rain, you are under cover, snug, dry, and warm. Your shop lighted up with the bright glare of your blazing hearth, and your face glowing as red as scarlet.

But, Willets, I am sorry to hear that you are at odds and ends with your neighbour Hodges. Some people say that "two of a trade can never

agree;" and if it be so, the more is the pity, but as you and Hodges are of different trades, I do not see what you have to quarrel about. I believe that he is in the wrong in this matter; but never mind that; your heart would be quite as light, and your fingers quite as nimble as they are now, if you lived in peace with God, and in charity with all mankind.

Now, Willets, take my advice; think of your neighbour's faults a little less, and read your Bible a little more, and then you may, perhaps, find out that a meek and forbearing and forgiving spirit is worth a kingdom: for "he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."*

A pious man has said that Christians' hearts are like iron; if they be once softened with the love of God, and of his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, they will more easily be joined together in love and affection. That horse-shoe that you are welding, would not easily be beaten into a proper form without the assistance of the fire; and, in like manner, your heart will never be what it ought to be, till softened by the love of God, and sanctified by the grace of his Holy Spirit. I take you to be a well-disposed man,

* Prov. xvi. 32.

Willets, and I know that you are a skilful and an industrious workman; add another good quality to those you already have, and give neither sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids, till you have shaken your neighbour Hodges heartily by the hand, and forgiven him the fault he has committed against you.

A CALL ON ONE GIVEN TO SPEAK FALSELY.

EDMUND, Edmund, I call upon you in bitterness of spirit. You were brought up in the Sunday-school, and were taught to "fear God, and keep his commandments," and yet, after all, your tongue is given to lying and slandering! I find that the evil report which had nearly occasioned John Harris to be turned out of his place, was spread by you; and that the tale about Patty Jones has no other foundation than your spite and malice. When I think, Edmund, of the pains which have been taken with you, of the advan-

tages you have had, and that you are now growing up a young man, with the character of one who regards not the truth, I feel quite discouraged. If you had ten thousand good qualities, all of them put together would never make amends for your being a slanderer.

Take a man and dress him in a crimson robe, put a golden crown upon his head, and a sceptre in his hand, and seat him on a glittering throne, and what would be thought of him if his brow had written upon it, "This man is a liar?" Not all his glare and his glory would screen him from shame and derision. If I thought that passages taken from the word of God would move you, I would give you fifty, every one of which would condemn you. "He that uttereth slander, is a fool."* "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile."† "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight."‡ "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."§ But it is not the want of knowledge that has led you to evil. May God, in his mercy, give you to abhor deceit and to love truth!

What advantage is there in a lie, Edmund?

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* Prov. x. 18.
† Ps. xxxiv. 13.
‡ Prov. xii. 21.
§ Rev. xxi. 8.

If it answer your present purpose, it is sure to cover you with future confusion. "The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment."* Now, Edmund, if ever you thought me to be your friend, do let me earnestly urge upon you to take this matter to heart. You are on the brink of a precipice. Stop in time. Strive hard to regain the credit you have lost. Let no temptation lead you to utter a falsehood. If you had no shoe to your foot, and loved the truth, you would be deserving of respect; but if you rolled in riches, the character of a liar would brand you with infamy. Hold fast the words of truth; and rather die than spread a slander or invent a lie.

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* Prov. xii. 19.

A CALL ON A BROTHER AND SISTER.

Visitor. I HOPE you are well, Mrs. Morton; I have called with the two little books which I promised William and Fanny. Oh, yonder they are, I see.

Mrs. Morton. I am much obliged to you. Come here, children; see what nice little books are on the table. It is not every promise that is kept so faithfully. Our young friends have been disappointed, in not receiving a puzzle which I bought for them yesterday. I cannot think why the man has not sent it.

Visitor. These little disappointments are not without their advantages; for they, in some degree, prepare the youthful mind for more serious

troubles in after-life. I will tell William and Fanny a circumstance which took place in the days of my childhood. It is just as much as I can remember, being very young when it occurred. My sister and I had been promised a great treat by Betty, the cook. Day after day, we wanted to know what the treat would be, and day after day, she put us off, saying, "Oh, it will be such a treat as you never had before." The longer she delayed to gratify us, the higher our expectations arose; and we doubted not that Betty was preparing for us one of the very best treats in the world.

At last, after a heavy fall of snow, Betty told us that, in the afternoon, she would give us the treat she had so long promised us, and then whispered in our ears that if we would not tell anybody, and not eat too many of them, she would boil us some snowballs. We were, as I said before, very young, or we could not have been so silly as to have felt pleasure in the prospect before us, but Betty talked so much of dipping the beautiful white snowballs, all piping hot, into sugar and treacle, that we were absolutely delighted, though we could not but think it was a very strange notion.

The afternoon came: my sister and I went into the kitchen almost too happy to contain ourselves.

There was Betty with a large saucepan, half filled with boiling water, on the fire, and a dish of nice clean white snowballs on the table. The sugar-basin and a pot of treacle stood ready, and never sure were happier hearts than those which then beat in our bosoms. "Now," said Betty, after she had put the snowballs one by one into the saucepan, and placed the cover over them, "you must watch the saucepan till they are quite done, while I put two little plates and spoons for you, that you may be quite comfortable." Betty bustled about the kitchen, making as much fuss as if she had been preparing for a dinner party, until both my sister and myself grew impatient, and insisted upon it that the snowballs must be boiled enough. The saucepan was taken from the fire, and placed just inside the fender, so that we might take out the hot snowballs ourselves; for which purpose we were provided with spoons, but to our utter amazement and consternation, when the lid was taken from the saucepan, not a single snowball was to be found! It was in vain we put our spoons to the very bottom of the saucepan and turned them round and round, the snowballs were not there; and, to add to our disappointment and distress, Betty burst out into a hearty laugh. My grandfather explained to us, afterwards, that the snowballs had melted in the saucepan; and I can

remember, even now, the smile which he had on his face when, taking us both on his knees and kissing us, he told us that, in going through the world, we should find many a fine promise and glowing expectation turn out to be but a boiled snowball.

Now, what my grandfather said to me, I say to you,—and I say it by my own experience,—many of this world's proudest promises will produce nothing. They may raise your expectations, they may afford you a degree of pleasure in the prospect, but they will end in disappointment, and yield you no more solid enjoyment than we derived from the boiled snowballs of our servant Betty.

But, my dear children, if many of this world's promises are so deceitful and hollow; if they burst like a bubble, or melt like a snowball, there is the more reason why we should rely on those heavenly promises which God has given us in his holy word. God has promised to forgive the sins of every repentant transgressor. He has promised that those who seek him early shall find him. He has promised to give grace and glory, and to withhold no good thing from those who walk uprightly. He has promised to take away from them that trust in his mercy the fear of death, and to give them everlasting life,

prepared for them by the merits of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

These are promises which will never deceive you; for faithful is He who has promised, and able and willing is He to perform. I dare say that you will not entirely forget the account given you of the snowballs; try, then, to remember also the promises of God to all who believe in him.

A CALL ON A FAMILIAR ACQUAINTANCE.

Have you an umbrella that you can spare me? for I must hasten home, though I have to go through the rain. Ay! that will do very well; though it is an old one, it will keep me from having a wet skin. I shall send it back as soon as I get home, for I do think that the neglect commonly practised, in not returning borrowed

umbrellas, is very blameable. If it were a fine day, friend Norton, I should not be over-fond of carrying this old oil-skin umbrella; for it looks as though it had been in some museum of curiosities for the last fifty years; but necessity works wonders, and overcomes many a proud feeling of the human heart.

What a poor, defenceless creature is man! He takes measures to protect himself from every drizzling shower, while the animals below him in the scale of creation can endure, unprotected, the rudest blasts. That is a blessed text in Isaiah which thus speaks of the Redeemer:—"A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest."* What a mercy to be protected through time and eternity! Eternity!—What an overwhelming thought! "Millions of ages crowding on millions of ages! millions of ages crowding on millions of ages! and again, millions of ages crowding on millions of ages, are but the beginning of eternity!"

* Isaiah xxxii. 2.

A CALL ON A SINCERE SEEKER AFTER TRUTH.

I OPEN your door to say, How do you do? for I saw you through the window reading your tract, and comparing it with your Bible. That is the right way, Alan: try every tract by the word of God; and if it do not agree with it, the best place for such a tract is, between the bars of the kitchen grate. I know, Alan, that you are one of those who are watching and waiting, anxious to drink of the brook of God's promises by the way, and to lift up your head.

We strangely neglect ourselves, when we neglect God; we sadly wander from our own peace, when we wander from his commandments. We are never so truly independent of this world's

joys and sorrows, as when we are, in heart and soul, totally dependent on our heavenly Father. Oh, that is a blessed season, when the soul, feeling itself pardoned, sanctified, and saved, through the immeasurable mercy of Jesus Christ, is ready to cast itself, with every joy and every care, upon "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" Every thought, word, and deed, are then in accordance with the will of God, in sweet agreement with the word of God, and nothing is desired but to be made more meet to partake of the grace of the Redeemer, to be one with the Saviour, and to behold his glory.

Watch and wait then, Alan; "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."*

"Pilgrim, burdened with thy sin,
Come thy way to Zion's gate;
There, till mercy let thee in,
Knock, and weep, and watch, and wait.
Knock!—He knows the sinner's cry;
Weep!—He loves the sinner's tears;
Watch!—for saving grace is nigh;
Wait till heavenly light appears."

* Luke xi. 10.

A CALL ON AN IDLE WORKMAN.

What, at home, still, John! It is but an hour since I met your master, who told me he was so busy, that he could not execute his orders fast enough; and here are you, losing the best part of the day!

"He that would thrive, must rise at five," and set to work as soon as he is up, too. What a thing it is that you should stand so much in your

own light! Here you can complain with anybody of the want of work, of the low rate of wages, of the high price of provisions, and of the difficulties that a poor man has, now-a-days, to support his family. You can talk of rent and taxes, and cry out against those who are better off than yourself; but do you think of mending the matter by idleness? Will that raise your wages, or lower your provisions, rent, and taxes? There is nothing like making the best of even a bad bargain. Did you never hear the old saying, "At the working man's house, hunger looks in but he dares not enter;" or, "Industry pays debts, while Idleness increases them?" You know very well that it can make no difference to me whether you work or play. Your industry will not put a penny into my pocket, nor your idleness deprive me of a farthing; but I cannot see you lessen your comforts without urging you to adopt a better course. To be idle is to be unhappy, for it is the hardest work in the world to do nothing. Look at an idle man: he is clothed with rags, the grass grows before his door, and weeds cover his garden; his gate swings on a broken hinge; the lock and key of his door are rusty; his house is filthy, and his furniture in confusion, and broken. Discomfort dwells with him, his moments pass heavily, and disgrace and want continually await him. Come,

come, bestir yourself; for "the hand of the diligent maketh rich," and "seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings."*

There is another evil, John, of a fearful kind, that attends idleness. He who is idle in the affairs of this world, is not likely to be diligent in the affairs of that which is to come. He who drags his heels heavily along the earth, will move his heart sluggishly on the way to heaven. I have not time to say more; but take what I have said in good part: I mean it for your good. Turn over a new leaf; adopt a new plan; be no longer "slothful in business," but "fervent in spirit serving the Lord."

Be an active servant to your earthly master, and a diligent disciple of Jesus Christ; and you will never regret the rebuke that I have given you. Farewell.

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* Prov. xxii. 29.

A CALL ON A HARD DRINKER.

I AM glad to find you alone, Morris; for I want to speak a few plain words to you. If no one else will be friend enough to tell you the truth, I will. Twice have you been seized with sudden illness, and brought to the very borders of the grave, and yet, here you are, indulging in intemperance and sin. That little property which you have, is a curse to you instead of a blessing. The glass is poisoning your soul. There is no time to lose: no, not a moment, Morris; for you are like a sailor on board a ship that is about to go to pieces. A man standing on the crumbling edge

of a precipice on a windy day is not in greater danger than you are. It is of no use to warn you, that "The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags,"* for this would have been your case many a long day ago, to the ruin of your family, the loss of your reputation, and the danger of your soul, if you could have made away with your little annuity. I will give you another text now; for as the disease gets worse, the medicine must be made stronger. The word of God says, that no drunkards "shall inherit the kingdom of God."† Awake, Morris, from your guilty sloth in time, lest you sleep the sleep of death, and wake in an eternal world.

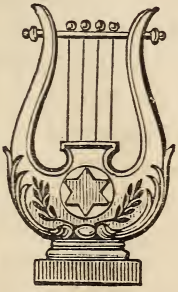
The fool, through every passing hour,
Beset with sin and sorrow,
Puts far away his dying day,
Though that may be to-morrow.

Be not this fool any longer, but now, at the eleventh hour, haste, run, flee for mercy to the fountain that yet is open for sin and uncleanness.

Your doctor tells me that he would not ensure your life a single day, and that your next attack will, most likely, be your last. Morris, Morris, despise not the goodness, the forbearance, and the

* Prov. xxiii. 21. † 1 Cor. vi. 10.

long-suffering of God, nor think that continuing in sin you shall escape his judgments. Would that I had words that would sink into your soul; for faithful are the wounds of a friend. Again, I say, lose not a moment, but flee to the Merciful for mercy. "Christ did not die for sin, that we might live in sin. He died that our sins might die, and our souls live." He who puts off repentance an hour, adds to his labour, and lessens the time allowed him for its performance. Morris, the lightnings are about to flash; the thunders are about to roar; if you despise the mercy that would save you, you will assuredly feel the judgments that will destroy you.



A CALL ON AN AGED DESPONDING CHRISTIAN.

Ah, Andrew, I see how it is with you! still groping among cobwebs in a dark corner, rather than gratefully enjoying the pure light of heaven; still choosing shade rather than sunshine. Really, Andrew, one might suppose that God had dealt very hardly with you, since you put so little confidence in him. Like the spies of old, you bring an evil report of the land where you dwell.

You have been preserved in your pilgrimage, these threescore and ten years, leaning on the staff of God's eternal promises in his Son Jesus Christ; and what stronger proof would you require of your heavenly Father's future goodness, than the remembrance of his past mercies! "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in

the way of righteousness."* Come! come! you must look upwards, and then you will not see the black beetles that crawl under your feet. God is faithful in that he has promised; and what good thing is there that he has not promised to his people? Have you taken the Scripture as your guide and counsellor, and delighted in the law of the Lord? Have you enjoyed communion with your Father in heaven for so many years, to mistrust him at the last? You may think you are forsaken, Andrew; but he will never forsake you. He who has hitherto guided you by his counsel, will, in his own good time, bring you safe to his glory. Think of the great compassion of God, in giving his only Son for sinners. Think of the grace of the Redeemer, in offering himself up as a willing sacrifice.

> "See from his head, his hands, his feet,
> Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
> Did e'er such love, or sorrow meet,
> Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

And do you, or can you think that love like this should be called in question? Is there any reason to doubt the goodness of One whose only begotten Son has died for you? Andrew! Andrew! I am afraid there is more sin in our dark moments than

* Prov. xvi. 31.

we are aware of, and that when we think we are only afflicting ourselves, we are in truth dishonouring God, and rebelling against him. A godly sorrow for sin is not inconsistent with a lively hope in God's mercy; but we cannot refuse the consolation which our heavenly Father offers us in his word, without despising his unspeakable gift, and telling him in our hearts, that his word is not to be taken.

I am sorry to speak hard words to you, Andrew; but you know that I have sorrowed with you, and spoken gently to you without any good effect. God's people require to be borne with, and treated tenderly; but there are seasons when they require to be taken by the shoulders and shaken, before they awake from their apathy and sinful repining. Is it not an unreasonable speech for a man at midnight to say, "It will never be day?" It is as unreasonable for a man in trouble to say, "O Lord, I shall never get free; it will always be thus, and never end."

Let me just put the thoughts of your heart into words, Andrew, and they will be enough to make a Christian man blush. "Almighty God, thou hast made me in thy wisdom, thou hast preserved me in thy goodness, from the days of my infancy, even until now. Thou hast bestowed upon me innumerable mercies. Thou

hast given thine only Son to die for me. Thou hast put into my hands the words of eternal life, and promised me the sacred influences of thine Holy Spirit. Thou hast been to me a wise Counsellor,—'a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother,'—a faithful covenant-keeping God; and yet, for all this, I cannot trust thee any longer! I doubt thy love; I disbelieve thy word; and I choose the dark and gloomy forebodings of my own desponding mind, rather than the bright and glorious influences of thy promises, thy presence, and thy salvation."

Think of this, Andrew; and if you do not return as a chastened child to your heavenly Father; and if you do not magnify the Lord, and rejoice heartily in the strength of his salvation, I shall mourn over you as over a backsliding brother, and pray for you as for one who setteth light by his Lord and Master, and undervalues the sacrifice of his Saviour Jesus Christ.

A CALL AT A COTTAGE ON A SATURDAY.

Stop! stop! Mrs. Jenkins. If I had not spoken just in time, your bucket of water would have filled my shoes. So, you are cleaning up your house for to-morrow. That's right! I dearly love to see a little preparation for the Lord's day. If many of your neighbours would follow your example, instead of gossiping away their time at their doors, it would be better for them. How excellent a thing it is to stir about, and to have things in comfortable order against the day of rest; so that when you get up in the morning there is nothing to hinder you from going to the house of God, and making the most of the Sabbath-day! I usually take a peep into

the houses, as I pass by on a Saturday, and always hope and think favourably of every woman whom I see busy with her mop and scrubbing-brush. We all need help on our way to heaven; and the merciful provision of a day of rest is as marrow to the bones of many a toil-worn and heavy-laden Christian. But mind, Mrs. Jenkins, that to prepare for the Sabbath-day, and then to neglect its advantages, would be a great mistake. Therefore make the most of God's gifts. "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."*

* Ps. c. 2, 4, 5.

A CALL ON A BLIND MAN.

HERE you are, sitting at your door as usual, Ambrose; enjoying the sunbeams, though you cannot discern them. I am glad to see you look so cheerful. The breeze blows delightfully this morning. A good man once said, that the wind was an emblem of our heavenly Father; for though we could not see it, yet it always made us sensible of its presence and its action. God is always making us sensible of his presence, by his manifold mercies; and though He has taken away your sight, He has given you his grace.

"Oh, that all the blind but knew him,
And would be advised by me!
Quickly they would hasten to him,—
He would cause their minds to see!"

This is a dark world, Ambrose, to all who have not the light of God's countenance, but especially to the blind. However, He who said, "Let there be light: and there was light!"* can turn the darkness into day, and bid the heart that is bowed down with care, "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

One of these days I shall call in and sit awhile with you; for a little cheerful conversation sometimes does us good, and makes our hearts glow again. Let me, in the meanwhile, leave you a text of Scripture to reflect on,—a precious promise to the pilgrims of the cross: "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."†

* Gen. i. 3. † Isa. xlii. 16.

A CALL ON A BEREAVED PARENT.

I HAVE just looked in, Mrs. Stevens, to say that I feel for you in your trouble, which is great; but He who has in faithfulness afflicted you, will, I doubt not, in mercy bind up the bones that he has broken. It is a hard thing to know how to speak to a bereaved parent; for when the harp is hung on the willow it will murmur, let the wind blow from what quarter it may; and oftentimes the soul refuses to be comforted, even though the consolation comes from Heaven. An overburdened heart sometimes turns away from the Bible itself, and doubts the promises of the Redeemer; but this should not be the case, you know it should not!

Your daughter was, no doubt, dear to you; but do you not think she was dearer to her Creator and Redeemer? Is not such a lamb safer in the Shepherd's bosom than in yours?

I am told that you take this affliction more to heart than a servant of God should do; and that you see the bitter cup much plainer than you see the Almighty hand which presents it. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, and still more faithful the wounds of the sinner's Friend, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and whose grace is all-sufficient; therefore have confidence in God:

> "Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
> But trust him for his grace;
> Behind a frowning providence
> He hides a smiling face."

Perhaps you have been unmindful of your blessings, and required this chastisement. Your child was a simple-hearted and diligent scholar at the Sunday-school, and you believe that she sought salvation through the Redeemer alone. Here, then, is mercy mingled with judgment, and cause of rejoicing amidst your regret. Magnify the Lord, and humbly rejoice in the strength of your salvation!

I have brought you a cordial in the shape of a

little tract, "To a Christian Parent, on the Death of an Infant;" and as it is adapted to your case, and offers sweet consolation, perhaps it may be a means, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, of drawing the poisoned arrow from your heart, and applying there the true balm of Gilead, the faithful promises of God, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus to all the followers of the Redeemer. Trust in God.

"A bruised reed he will not break,
Afflictions all his children feel;
He wounds them for his mercy's sake,—
He wounds to heal."

A CALL ON A FAMILY OF OLD AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

Good morrow to you! It is not often that I see three generations under one roof, all well in health, and surrounded with comforts. I hope that you are all journeying together on your way to heaven, singing of mercy as you pass on your pilgrimage. "The whole life of a Christian should be full of praises to God; we should neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, nor talk, but as doing all to God's glory and praise." You have an humble and lowly dwelling here, but it abounds with comforts.

How old are you, Mary?

Mary. Ten, sir.

Visitor. Then, I will answer for it that you have ten thousand sins to repent of, and ten thousand mercies to be grateful for. Perhaps the thought never struck you before; do not let it escape you now. Youth is the time to serve the Lord; and the way to end well, is to make a good beginning. How old are you, William?

William. I was twelve last March, sir.

Visitor. Then you have, perhaps, still more sins to forsake, and certainly more mercies gratefully to acknowledge. You must be up and doing, William; for time flies apace. Duty and safety go together through the world; and if you hope ever to partake of glory above, you must be a true and faithful follower of Jesus Christ below. How old are you, Joseph?

The Father. Forty-two, and my wife almost forty.

Visitor. Ay, then you must bestir yourselves. There is no time to lose in your case, for youth has gone, and your prime is flying after it. God has done much for you and your family. What have you done for the glory of God? What are you doing? And what do you intend to do? If you have not yet made up your mind to forsake sin, and to cling to the cross of the Redeemer, why, then, think upon these words: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God

is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* What age are you, Mr. Stanley?

The Grandfather. Seventy-six, sir; and I feel that the infirmities of age are creeping upon me.

Visitor. Be thankful that they are not leaping instead of creeping upon you. I need not tell you that the time is short, and that your days are drawing near to a close. "Where am I going?" should be a frequent question with you. With a kindly spirit let me say to you, "Flee from the wrath to come;" and ponder on the passage, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." "Look within yourselves, and at your best works, and you will see enough for humiliation. Look into the word of grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, and you will see enough for consolation." May grace reign among you, and peace be multiplied.

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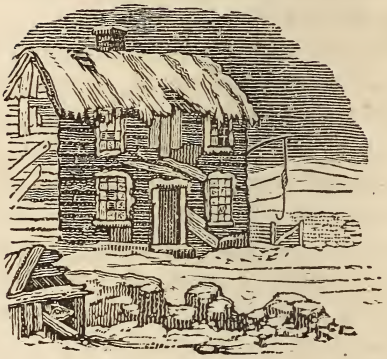
* Rom. vi. 24.



A CALL ON A DISTRESSED FAMILY.

My friends, I have heard that you are in great distress, and truly this dismal room, and the appearance of a wretched habitation, at such a severe season, is distressing. The broken window, the dirty straw in the corner, that crazy joint-stool, and the rags upon your backs, all show that your comforts are but few. I do not know whether you have brought all this poverty upon yourselves or not, by bad conduct, nor is it my wish to condemn you; my object now is not to inquire the cause of your distress, but to relieve it. By and by you will receive a basket with a few comforts for your present wants, and we must see a little into your situation afterwards. Keep up your

spirits, and look to God for his guidance and support, for he can do more for you than the whole world. If you look to him you will not look in vain. The word of God says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread."* Your poor childen seem pinched with hunger, I will go and hasten the comforts that are prepared; but remember that the body, though provided for, must sometime die, while the soul will live for ever and ever. "To the Lord belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him."† Seek, then, the Lord with your whole hearts; and may his grace be your abiding consolation.

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* Ps. xxxvii. 23—25. † Dan. ix. 9.

A CALL ON A BAKER.

Just come in, I see, from delivering your bread, William; and, no doubt, pretty well tired. You are in a small way of business; but, as the old proverb says, "First creep, and then go." After a while, instead of carrying out your own bread, you will be able to keep a man to do it for you, I dare say. Ay, well may you wipe your brow; I should wipe mine too, if I had been carrying your basket. Yours is a useful calling. It differs from that of a minister of the gospel in this—that you distribute food for the body, while he deals out food for the soul. They tell me that bakers sometimes put into their bread something else besides good wheaten flour, and thereby enrich themselves, and wrong their customers. I am far

from believing one half of the evil reports which I hear; but, no doubt, there are dishonest men among bakers, as well as among other trades. If you are one of them, let me tell you that you are injuring no one so much as yourself. If a fish could see the hook, and the line, and the rod, and the fisherman, as plainly as he sees the bait, he would never be taken; and if the dishonest man could discern the enemy of souls as clearly as he discerns his temptations, he would not so speedily grasp at the ill-gotten gain, that allures him to his destruction.

But if it be wrong in a baker to give us bad bread, which may injure our health; it must be worse in a minister to give us bad doctrine, which may injure our souls. As good bread strengthens the frame of the natural man, so sound doctrine invigorates the soul of the Christian. It is a blessed thing to be fed with wholesome food, and to be nurtured and nourished with Divine truth. My dealing with you in the way of trade, is a pretty sure proof, William, that I have a good opinion of you; and, therefore, you must not think my remarks hard. Read this tract, and then give it to one of your customers: it may be useful, temporally and spiritually; for peace of mind is, after all, the best medicine for the health of the body. In your industrious attempts to get for-

ward, forget not that "to have a portion in the world is a mercy, but to have only the world for a portion is a misery." But I am forgetting the errand on which I came. You must send me a barrel of your best flour, for we have not enough left to make a pie-crust. Good day to you. Mind and read the tract, and bear in your memory that "without God's providence nothing falls out in the world; without his commission nothing stirs; without his blessing nothing prospers."

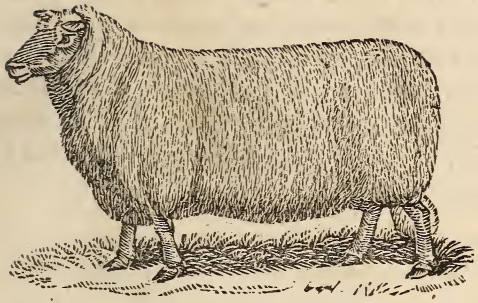
A CALL WITH A PRESENT OF A BIBLE.

I HAVE brought you the Bible, Thomas, which I promised you; and I do hope that it will be a treasure to you and to all around you—an inexhaustible treasure: if it be not, you will have no one to blame but yourself.

The family Bible should be regarded, in every house, as the ark of the Lord was regarded among the children of Isreal. It should be holy unto the Lord; and we should read it, value it, and look upon it as the especial gift of God to us for the benefit of our souls.

"Though many a page to lead our feet
In wisdom's ways be given,
The Bible is the Book of books
To guide the soul to heaven."

Read it at the dawn of day, when you are refreshed with slumber, and the sun shines in the heavens. Read it at eventide, before you commit yourself for the night to the care of the great Shepherd of Israel, who neither sleeps nor slumbers. Read it in company with the followers of Jesus Christ, to strengthen your faith one with another. Read it in solitude, to brighten your hope of immortality. Read it in the day of prosperity, when your heart is thankful. Read it in the season of sorrow, when you require consolation. Read it when tempted to do evil, to fortify your soul against sin. Read it on the Lord's day, before and after attending the house of God. Read it, in short, at all times, and at all seasons, when you have the opportunity; for the more you know of the word and will of God, and of the grace of his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, the happier you will be, and the more anxious to obey him, honour him, love him, and praise him all the days of your life.



A CALL ON A BUTCHER.

Have you a nice little joint of mutton this morning, Mr. Haines? Ay, that looks as though it would be the very thing. Just put it upon your steel yard, that we may know what it weighs, and send it to good old Mary Watkins. Poor thing! she looks as though meat had not entered her mouth for some time. A little nice broth may comfort her, and do her good. In her day she has comforted many a one, and ought not to be forgotten now.

Butcher. True, sir, true. The old lady has bought many a joint of meat at my shop; but she has sadly come down in the world since then.

Visitor. She has indeed; but the poorer she gets in worldly goods, the richer she seems to be in heavenly hopes and Christian graces. I look

upon her to be the richest woman I know; for if peace of mind, a spirit of contentment, a knowledge that God has done all things well concerning her, and a well-grounded hope of eternal life, through the merits of her Saviour, be not riches, I know not where to look for them. She has her sorrows, to be sure; but

> "The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
> Leads to the land where sorrows are unknown."

There will always be something or other here, Mr. Haines, to try us. Look at the flies there! no doubt they are a sad plague to you this hot weather. You do well to cover over your beef in cloths, as I see you do; but, with all your care, the flies are no doubt too many for you.

Butcher. Ay, sir, they are little things; but nobody knows how they torment us.

Visitor. I dare say they do. As it is with your meat, so it is with our hearts. While you have a swarm of flies buzzing about, bent on doing mischief, we have all a swarm of evil thoughts, evil desires and temptations, ready to do us an injury. You are always on the watch with your whisk against the flies; and we ought ever to be on the watch against our temptations. An humble, watchful, prayerful spirit is our best defence; and a hope of everlasting life through Jesus Christ our best consolation.

A CALL ON A SLUGGARD.

WALTERS, if I speak the truth, I must say that I am ashamed of you. At six o'clock exactly, you were to be with me to begin your job of white-washing; and now the clock has struck nine, and you have not got your breakfast. When a labouring man does not rise in good time in a morning, it makes us suspect that his nights are not spent soberly. You are a good-tempered man, Walters, and a decent workman; what a pity it is, then, that you cannot get up in a morning!

"Plough deep while sluggards sleep,
And you shall have corn to sell and to keep."

But if you are not to quit your bed till eight or

nine o'clock, at this time of the year, it is not likely that you will have much corn, or much money to buy it with. You look a little conscious that you know what I say to be true, and true it is, sure enough; for who would employ a man who could not get to his work before breakfast? Bates, the builder, has been at work these three hours or more; his men were whistling as they mounted the ladders to the scaffolding by six o'clock. You must take to a different course, Walters; for every one will not bear with you as I have done. You used to be a different sort of man; but, somehow or other, you have got into bad habits latterly, which I am sadly afraid will do you a deal of mischief.

Only read the description of the condition of a slothful man, as given in the Proverbs of Solomon: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo! it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man."*

* Prov. xxiv. 30—34.

This description is given, as I said before, in the Bible, a book that we cannot read too frequently. It would be well, Walters, if you would give your mind to it much more than you do. It is full of instruction, well fitted for employers and workmen: but, until you rise a little earlier, it is not likely that you will find much time for your Bible.

"Sleeping foxes catch no poultry," is an old saying; and a sleepy mason will make little money. He who sees the sun rise will do a good day's work before it sets; and one clink of the trowel, or sweep of the white-wash brush before breakfast, is worth two after dinner. Come, you are ready now: let it be the last morning that you set off to work at nine o'clock. Solomon says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise."* Solomon was a wise man, Walters; but you will be a very unwise one, if you do not profit by his instruction. You must now work hard to make up the time you have lost: cheerfully goes the time with a diligent man; but the way of the slothful man is an hedge of thorns.

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* Prov. vi. 6.

A CALL ON ONE OF A KIND DISPOSITION.

Though you are a stranger, I could not help running in to thank you for your kindness to that poor woman who has just left you. She appeared very ill, and you have sent her on her way comforted. May His blessing, who has said that a cup of cold water given in his name shall not be without its reward, rest upon you, and remain with you. I know not whether you are a follower of Christ, but I know that kindness is a Christian grace; and in a world wherein we are dependent one upon another, it ought to be practised by all. Oh, how the crooked paths of our pilgrimage are made straight, and the rough places plain, by the spirit of kindness!

The commonest act of attention done from a principle of love is doubled in its value.

> The rose is not without its power,
> When churlishness in anger throws it;
> But oh, how doubly sweet the flower,
> When kindness, with a smile, bestows it!

It was once said of the great traveller Ledyard, who had visited barbarous countries, that, in his wanderings about the world, he had frequently met with kindness from man; but that in no single instance did he ever, in distress, apply to woman without meeting with pity and kindness.

Whenever I see or hear of a woman giving way to a bitter, a churlish, or an unkind spirit, I think how different she is from what she ought to be. An unkind and hard-hearted woman is a reproach to her sex, and ought to be shunned as one that it is not creditable to be acquainted with. But though kindness is of so much value, Christian kindness is more valuable than all. "Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* We cannot, like Mary of old, wash the Redeemer's feet with our tears, and wipe them with our hair; but we may show

* Eph. iv. 32.

kindness to his disciples, and indeed to all who stand in need of our assistance. You have done me good as well as that poor woman, by your attention to her; and again I thank you; but while you are kind to others, be not unkind to yourself. Neglect not your own soul. Fall at the footstool of your heavenly Father. Cling to the cross of the Redeemer, and plead the merits of the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. Then shall all things work together for your good; then shall earth prove to you the highway to heaven, and grace be succeeded by eternal glory.

A CALL ON A MILKWOMAN.

Visitor. You are about to set off with your milk-cans, I see, Mrs. Collet. No doubt you sometimes think that your business is a hard one; but we all have our burdens to bear: some carry them on their shoulders, and others on their hearts.

Milkwoman. Taking out milk is all very well, sir, in fine weather; but nobody knows the sloppy walks that I have had through the winter, in the dirt and rain: for let what will come, hail, rain, or shine, I must go out with my milk-pails all the same. For a matter of three weeks, I had hardly a dry thread on my back from morning to night; and that's trying work, sir.

Visitor. True, true; but we cannot always have fine weather, Mrs. Collet. If the sun were

always shining, how little should we feel the pleasure of a fine day. There will be something or another for us to put up with as long as we live. One thing, however, we may take for granted, and that is,—the more cheerfully we go about our duties, the more pleasant they will become to us. Now take my advice, Mrs. Collet. Keep as good an account, from this time forward, of your sun-shiny days as you have hitherto done of your wet ones; and you will find yourself, perhaps, less disposed to complain than to be thankful. The more we love God, the more shall we be satisfied with his dealings with us. He who gave us his only Son to die for sinners, will also give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

A CALL ON A HUCKSTERWOMAN.

Good morning, Mrs. Marnet! I will thank you to give this book to your little girl. A long job is before you to weigh up all that sugar into half and quarter pounds, but practice makes us quick and perfect in most things. Your business is not without its temptations; but the scales, the emblem of justice, are always before your eyes. I will

tell you what should always come into your head when you hold up the scales between your thumb and finger. It is this verse of the Holy Scriptures: "A false balance is abomination to the Lord; but a just weight is his delight;"* but I hardly need remind you of this, Mrs. Marnet, as every one in the neighbourhood speaks favourably of your integrity. I will answer for it, that you never felt your heart the heavier for putting an extra pinch to make the scale turn well. No! no! and you never will; your business requires carefulness, and will not admit of much liberality; but, for all that, uprightness is indispensable. Pinching and screwing without conscience may make money, but it will never give peace; and, without peace, money is useless as dross. Hundreds have found, to their cost, that riches without God's blessing are unprofitable things; and thousands have experienced, that "Godliness with contentment is great gain."† Give this tract to your next customer; it may tell him something which he does not know; and, if not, it will at any rate refresh his memory with the truth, that "God be merciful to me a sinner" is a suitable prayer for every poor sinner and for every true believer.

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* Prov. xi. 1. † 1 Tim. vi. 6.

A CALL ON AN UNDUTIFUL SON.

Barnard, I have often called upon you with a feeling of satisfaction; but I now call with anguish of spirit. Your undutiful and unkind conduct to your only surviving parent pains me to the very heart.

The brier may soon be bent over the grave of your mother, and you may bend there, too, with the thorns of remorse in your bosom for your undutiful conduct. It is a bitter thing to walk over the grave of those we have used unkindly. "Honour thy father and thy mother,"* is the com-

* Exod. xx. 12.

mand of Him who can punish with his heaviest judgments all those who despise his commandments. So you see, that it is not the displeasure of your poor mother alone that you have to fear, but the wrath and the punishments of God. Your mother is weak; but God is strong. Your mother may pass over your bad conduct, but God will notice it; for though he has abundant mercy for the penitent sinner, he has terrible judgments for the hardened transgressor.

His mercy spreads around the world,
And gently lights on all;
But fearful from his angry hand
His righteous judgments fall.

There can be no pleasure to me, Barnard, in thus rebuking you, and I had rather dwell on your good qualities than reprove your faults; but you ought to know that your best friends set their faces against such unkindness as you have practised. By and by, you will wish that it were possible to blot out your errors with your tears; but when your mother, now heavily afflicted with infirmities, is in an eternal world, your contrition will be too late, and your tears will be shed in vain. Can you follow your only parent to her long home; can you see her body lowered into the grave, and the earth covering it, without remorse, without agony?

No, believe me, you cannot do these things. If you consider me to be your friend, follow my counsel, be kind to your afflicted mother; she has borne with you, bear with her; she has been kind to you, be kind to her; she has watched, and wept, and prayed for you, watch and weep and pray for her, that her last days may not be embittered with your unkindness, but rendered happy by your dutiful affection.

A CALL ON A FRIEND IN TROUBLE.

One word in passing, for I have no time to tarry. Though I know that you are in trouble, yet I know also that your trouble is not unknown to God. If I can, I will call in to-morrow, and see if something cannot be done that will lighten your heart: in the mean time trust in God, for it is a sad thing that we cannot trust our heavenly Father in the shade as well as in the sunshine; but so it is. When his will agrees with our own, we admire his wisdom and goodness; but when otherwise, we think that he deals hardly with us. All is right when he gives, but all is wrong when he takes away. This should not be the case; for

he is a faithful and covenant-keeping God, and ought to be trusted at all times. Confidence in him is joy to the heart, and stability to the soul. It was a dark night, no doubt, to Daniel, when he was cast into the den of lions; but was there no ray of light shining upon him? Ay, indeed there was, for he believed that the God whom he served was able to deliver him from the lions, and he did deliver him. There are no fewer stars in heaven now, to shine in the midnight hour, than there were in the days of Daniel: and when, in our trouble, we cry unto him who placed them there, he will deliver us, also, out of our distresses.

Cheer up, then! God was with his people in the years which have gone by. He can open a fountain of water even in the solid rock. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old."* And as he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, he will be with his people now, "a very present help in trouble."†

Take heart, friend Wellings; and think of your mercies as well as of your troubles. What is the use of poring over the cobwebs in the dark

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* Isa. xliii. 9. † Ps. xlvi. 1.

corners of our earthly habitations? Why should we dwell for ever on our cloudy mornings and darksome nights? Away with these unworthy doubts and desponding fears, that dishonour God! Let us sing a new song, even praise and thanksgiving:

And gaze with confidence on high;
The clouds, ere long, shall sever;
Though frowns awhile the wintry sky,
It will not frown for ever.

Let brighter themes our souls employ:—
Redemption's wondrous story!
And light, and life, and love, and joy,
And everlasting glory!

A CALL ON ONE EASILY LED ASTRAY.

RICHARD! since I last called on you, I have thought many times of your words, "I take but little pleasure." Now that word "little" has led thousands into a great deal of mischief. What one calls little, another may call much; and it is by little and little that the soul of a sinner is led the whole length of temptation, sin and sorrow.

A man may take a little holiday, a little whisky and a little pleasure; he may lose a little time and spend a little money, till he becomes almost unknown to himself,—a great drunkard, a great spendthrift and a great libertine.

If you will think for a moment, you must be convinced that what I say is true. The greatest rogue that ever robbed another, the most notorious highwayman that ever robbed a traveller, became so by little and little. If a little leak

will sink a great ship, and a little fire destroy a great city, so, in like manner, a little sin may be the means of ruining the soul. When, therefore, you are asked to do what is wrong, never deceive yourself by thinking that you may go a little way out of the path of rectitude. He who keeps in the broad turnpike-road of duty is not likely to lose himself; but he who quits it for the thorny by-paths of his own inclinations and passions, may wander where he never intended.

You are too easily persuaded, Richard; too unstable in your thoughts. A man should not be blown about like a weathercock with every breath, but should hold fast that which is good. What is the use of your good intentions, if every one can tempt you to abandon them? What is the use of reading your Bible, if every thoughtless companion can laugh you out of the convictions it produces on your mind? To be one thing to-day and another to-morrow; to be in the house of God on Sunday, and to sit muddling in a tavern on Monday, is not the way to do good to others, or to profit your own soul. Be a Christian indeed, Richard; for your half-and-half measures will never answer. "A Christian, when he is beaten out of all other comforts, yet hath a God to turn unto; a wicked man, beaten out of worldly comforts, is as a naked man in a storm, and an

unarmed man in the field; or as a ship tossed in the sea without an anchor, which presently dashes upon rocks, or falleth upon quicksands."

Once more, then, I say, seek to be a Christian indeed, and live a life of faith in God's mercy, and in dependence on the unchangeable word of his promise. Give up the husks of worldly enjoyments; seek the presence of your heavenly Father; implore his forgiveness; and seek for the good things which he has provided for them that love him. Be no more a changeling, but "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."*

* 1 Cor. xv. 58.

A CALL ON A SERVANT FOND OF CHANGING HER PLACE.

Visitor. So, Sally! you are making a call on your poor mother! and I am glad to see that you pay her attention. Do you still live with Mrs. Simmonds?

Sally. Yes, sir; but I have some thoughts of going away to New York. A fellow-servant of mine sends me word that she receives great wages; so I think I shall go and try my luck.

Visitor. New York! Why, it is the very worst place you can go to, unless you have a good place ready to receive you when you get there. "A rolling stone," Sally, "gathers no moss!" better by half stay where you are than go to New York; for great wages are in many cases the cause of great troubles. Nothing like being contented in that state of life in which it

has pleased God to call us. Did you ever hear the fable of the discontented spider, Sally?

Sally. No, sir, I do not know that I ever did.

Visitor. Well, then, you shall hear it now. A spider, says the fable, once lived a peaceable and undisturbed life in the roof of a barn, where he contrived to catch as many flies as satisfied his hunger. It is true, that he saw but little to amuse him; but then he was perfectly safe from danger, and perhaps he would have remained contented with his condition had not a travelled spider crawled up the barn door, and paid him a visit in the roof. His new friend expressed his surprise that he could live such a humdrum life, while he had the opportunity of seeing so much of the world. "If," said he, "you would only spin a web on the ceiling of the farm-house kitchen, you would not only catch more flies than you could eat, but see a little of life into the bargain." This conversation had so great an effect on the foolish spider, that he became quite discontented, and left his quiet home in the roof of the barn, to set out on his travels to the farm-house kitchen, which he reached without a single accident, and soon spun a web between two flitches of bacon, which were hanging near each other from the ceiling.

For some time he was quite delighted with

his new habitation, for he snared more flies in a few hours than he could catch in the barn during a week, and saw more of the affairs of the world than he had seen before in all his days. In an unlooked-for moment, however, Betty mounted suddenly upon the dresser to cut a piece of bacon from one of the flitches on which the thoughtless spider had woven his web, when with one stroke of her knife she knocked the insect, bruised and dying, to the ground. "Silly creature that I am," said the dying spider; "had I been contented in my station, I might now have been living in peace; but, instead of that, my discontent has brought me to destruction."

Sally, a little thought on this fable may save you from a great deal of trouble; I will therefore leave you, that you may reflect upon it.

A CALL ON A QUARRELSOME NEIGHBOUR.

I AM very glad to find you at home, Hannah; and now do not speak one word to me, but listen to what I have to say. It is more pleasant to praise than to blame, but we must be faithful one to another. Your quarrel with your neighbour Sanders is a reproach to both of you, though I believe that you are more in fault than she is. A mad dog is not so dangerous in a neighbourhood, as a hasty spirit and a turbulent tongue. I had rather see a house on fire, than hear two neighbours, who ought to dwell together in peace, giving way to anger, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. You are reddening up, Hannah,

and are, no doubt, ready to justify yourself; but, for all that, it is my duty to tell you that in quarrelling, as you do so often, you are sinning against God, and breaking his commandments.

If you read the tracts and books which, from time to time, I leave with you; if you attended Divine service more regularly; and if, above all, you pondered your Bible more frequently, with an humble spirit and fervent prayer, you would see the sin of quarrelling in all its deformity.

> The wolf may prowl, the tiger howl,
> The lion rend his prey;
> With anger pressed, the human breast
> Is fiercer far than they.

If you were as anxious, Hannah, to put peace into your own heart, as you are to plant a thorn in the breast of your neighbour, you would bear with an injury, and return that soft answer which turns away wrath. If you are in the wrong, you ought to do this; and if you are right, it will be still more to your credit to show a forbearing, kind, and forgiving spirit. What say the Scriptures? "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving

one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

Whatever you may have to reply, tell it to me when I call next time; you look too angry now. What I have said from my own heart, think lightly of, if you like; but what I have spoken from God's holy word, do not despise. It was more than human kindness that first taught us to forgive our enemies, but we are not true disciples of Jesus Christ if we do not practise the lesson. You may think of it as you will, Hannah, but no one respects you on account of your high spirit and turbulent tongue. You may be feared, but you cannot be loved. Take a word of advice, pray more frequently and more fervently that the grace of the Holy Spirit may restrain your growing infirmity, and enable you to conquer your besetting sin. Forgive your neighbour Sanders, and be reconciled together in peace and Christian affection.

Thus spoke, when he was here below,
The Lord of earth and heaven:
"Till thou canst every sin forgive,
Thy sins are not forgiven."

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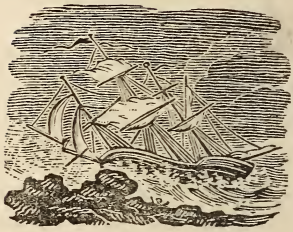
* Ephes. iv. 32.



A CALL ON AN OLD SAILOR.

Visitor. Good morning, Benjamin, good morning; you do well to be reading your Testament. Time has been when I should have found you employed in a different manner. Never was there a more turbulent, headstrong spirit than yours; but God's grace can make a lion into a lamb.

Benjamin. Ay, sir, I was rough enough, and wilful enough; but "let by-gones be by-gones." I never look back on my past days without feeling ashamed of them.

Visitor. Well, 'tis a mercy that a change has taken place. You are now a God-fearing man. Most men who have been at sea like to have their rooms hung round with pictures of battles; but your room looks peaceable enough. The Testament on the table, the tracts on the chimney-piece, the Christmas carols against the wall, and

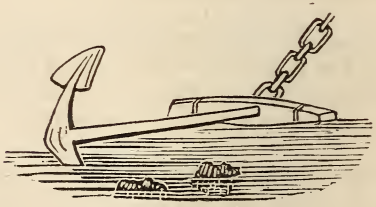
that picture of our Saviour riding into Jerusalem, all bespeak that you are a man of quiet and peaceable habits. Oh, here is the tract about "James Covey;" I see, you don't forget your old comrades.

Benjamin. No, sir: I have read the tract over many times, and that part of it where poor Covey cries out, "Well, never mind! I have lost my legs to be sure, and mayhap may lose my life; but we've beat the Dutch! so I'll have another cheer for it; huzza, huzza!" That part, sir, often brings to my mind my own fierce and determined spirit. I felt just as Covey did, when I lost my leg; but the same mercy that melted the lion heart of Covey, melted mine, and made me more anxious to conquer sin, than to gain a victory over my fellow-creatures.

"A tar should be true to his country and king,
And have none in the world to upbraid him;
But his heart should confide in the Saviour that died,
And praise the Almighty that made him."

Visitor. It is said, that God never takes any thing from his people, without giving them something better in return. When he took away your leg, he gave you a knowledge of yourself as a sinner; and when he deprived you of the disposition to glory in your own deeds, he gave, instead,

the desire to glory in the grace, mercy, and truth of Jesus Christ. Pilgrims to the heavenly city must sometimes walk among briers and thorns; but whether in peace on land, or mid the battle's rage on the mighty ocean, those for whom the Saviour shed his blood are safe. "They that have God for their God, have angels for their guard." My visits are never very long, Benjamin, and I must be going now. It may do us both good to remember that "a believer's comfort in living, is to live to Christ; and in dying, it is that he shall go to Christ." Farewell.



A CALL ON A LIGHT-HEARTED YOUNG MAN.

Visitor. Ay, ay, Frank, you are singing away, and I heartily love cheerfulness; but I wish, with all my heart, that I could hear you singing the praises of the Redeemer. Some day or other I hope a new song will be put into your mouth, even thanksgiving to God. You must not expect to pass through the world always as light-hearted as you now are.

Frank. Oh, I warrant me, what should hinder it? I have no notion of going whining along as some people do. Do your best, and fear nothing, is my motto.

Visitor. And yet there is much to fear when we have done our best, Frank; for the best we can do is bad enough. You must expect troubles as well as your neighbours.

> Fortune may favour, fancy may beguile,
> Hope wave her golden wings and sweetly smile;
> But sad experience, with a brow o'ercast,
> Sighing with grief and pointing to the past,
> Whispers, the fair illusion to destroy,
> "That joy unmingled is not earthly joy."

It is an excellent thing to have a cheerful heart: but, for all that, if we have not something better to depend upon in "the sundry and manifold changes of the world;" if our hearts are not fixed "where true joys are to be found;" all our cheerfulness will not render us happy under the troubles of life, and will do nothing for us in passing through "the dark valley of the shadow of death."

Frank. My heart never failed me yet, however; and as to what may happen, that is all uncertain.

Visitor. No, no, Frank, all is not uncertain. It is certain that we shall meet with worldly trouble; it is certain that we shall be tempted with

sin; it is certain that we shall die; it is certain that we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; and it is equally certain that we shall be happy or miserable through eternity. There is no uncertainty about these things, and there ought to be no backwardness or delay in preparing for them.

Frank. Well, I always hope for the best.

Visitor. But if the best hope in your heart be not fixed on Divine things, it may as well be fixed on the sand by the sea-shore, which is moved backwards and forwards with every tide.

Our hope is hopeless if God hide his face;
Our faith is faithless if not fixed on high:
Without God's blessing honour is disgrace,
And all our uprightness dishonesty;
Our clearest vision blindness in his sight;
Our strength is weakness, measured by his might.

Frank. You are preaching me a fine sermon, and all that you say is right enough, no doubt. Perhaps I shall think more of these things by and by.

Visitor. That "by and by" is a trap laid by the enemy of men's souls for their destruction. Thousands have been caught in it. Most men mean to be religious by and by; that is, they are willing to devote themselves to God, as soon as they shall have no strength left to follow after sin. But

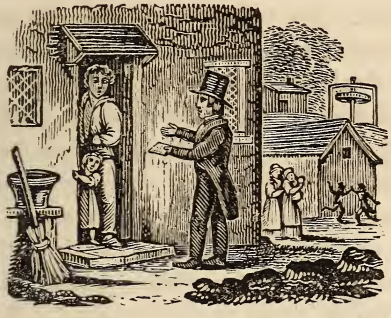
remember, Frank, "If you forget God when you are young, God may forget you when you are old."

Frank. There is something in that, to be sure; but I must take care of the main chance, you know.

Visitor. The "main chance," as you call it, may turn out to be a mischance; for, whatever you think of it, the main business in this world is to secure an interest in the next. We should "fear God for his power, trust him for his wisdom, love him for his goodness, praise him for his greatness, believe him for his faithfulness, and adore him for his holiness."

Frank. You are setting me rather a hard lesson; you are giving me too much to attend to at one time.

Visitor. If you think so, I will say no more now; but, when the Spirit of God is our instructor, hard lessons become easy. Bear in mind, Frank, that they who fear God least, have reason to fear him most; and that none are so likely to die a death of hope and confidence, as they who live a life of faith and obedience. Farewell.



A CALL ON A READER OF TRACTS.

Visitor. As you are at the door, Mr. Start, I will put a tract into your hand as I pass: "Repentance and Happy Death of Lord Rochester." Perhaps you may not have read it.

Mr. Start. No; for I very seldom read any tracts at all.

Visitor. And yet you might get some good from them. When a tract is written in a good spirit, given in a good spirit, received in a good spirit, and read in a good spirit, it seldom fails to produce some benefit. I would not ask you to read that tract, if I thought it would do you an injury.

Mr. Start. Oh no, I dare say not; but there are so many notions of one kind or other afloat, that I can hardly believe any of them.

Visitor. One reason why there are such different opinions among mankind may be, that many people think of this world alone, while others bear in mind that there is a world to come. "The two best things," said a philosopher, "are health of body and peace of mind." "In my opinion and experience," replied an aged servant of Christ, "there are two still better—a conviction that we are sinners, and a knowledge that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." We know that health of body is sure to decline, and that peace of mind, without a well-grounded hope of heaven, cannot last long; whereas, if, knowing we are sinners, we seek Him who died to save us, it will be a blessing to us through all eternity. But I must go on; good morning, Mr. Start; oblige me by reading the tract I have left with you.

A CALL ON A PARTY OF BOYS.

HERE you are, all as merry as crickets, as lively as singing birds, and as busy as bees in their hive on a fine summer's day—not a sorrowful face among you. I expected how it would be; holiday and happiness are the same things in the mind of young people. Well, in my time I have been as merry and light-hearted as the best of you; nor do I think that we can be too happy in this world, if our happiness be not of a kind to interfere with our hope of a better.

It is not my intention to interrupt you in your sports, and indeed I am in too much haste to stay with you long; but for a few minutes gather

around me, and I will tell you a tale. Ay, ay! I see that you are all ready enough to listen to my tale, but whether you will be equally ready to profit by the lesson it conveys, is not equally certain; however, I will begin, for your eyes are set upon me almost as though you were ready to eat me.

Once on a time lived a powerful king, who reigned over a large and fertile country. He had crowns of gold and pearls, and sceptres of ivory and precious stones. His treasury was full of the costly things of the earth; tens of thousands of armed men were ready to obey his bidding, and his dominion extended from sea to sea. But without God's blessing, worldly possessions are but an increase of care, and as this mighty monarch feared not God he was dissatisfied and unhappy.

In the dominions of the king lived a certain dervise, famed for abstinence, sanctity, wisdom, and piety; and the king, willing to profit by the instructions of the holy man, paid him a visit. He found him clothed in sackcloth, living in a cave surrounded with high rocks, on the borders of a wilderness.

"Holy man," said the king, "I come to learn how I may be happy." Without giving any reply the dervise led the king through the rugged pathways of the place until he brought him in front of a high rock, near the top of which an eagle

had built her eyrie. "Why has the eagle builded her nest yonder?" said the dervise. "Doubtless," replied the king, "that it may be out of the way of danger." "Then imitate the bird," said the dervise; "build thy throne in heaven, and thou shalt reign there unmolested and in peace."

Now the king would have willingly given the dervise a hundred pieces of gold, if he would have accepted it, for this precious piece of advice; and here am I giving it to you for nothing. It may be as useful to you all as it was to the king, for you are all as much interested in being happy as he was. As the eagle built her nest on the rugged rock, build your hope on the "Rock of Ages." As the dervise told the king to erect his throne in heaven, so I tell you to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."* Do this, and you will be above the reach of danger for time and eternity.

Farewell, my boys, farewell! I hope that I leave you all as happy as I found you. The pleasures of youth have been mine, and the cares of manhood have been endured by me; but if you were to ask me at this moment what

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* Col. iii. 1, 2.

makes my heart at ease, my spirit cheerful, and my hope bright, I would answer, Because I believe that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;"* and that, when flesh and heart fail me, God will be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

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* 1 Tim. i. 15.

A CALL ON A PARTY OF GIRLS.

Well, my little maidens, your tongues are going like a watchman's rattle, and you are skipping about like so many lambs in a meadow, on a May morning. A good game at play now and then is an excellent thing, and a cheerful spirit, a thankful heart, and a light pair of heels, are worth having. Now let me tell you that if you had a holiday all the year round, you would possess neither happy hearts nor cheerful spirits, for too much even of a holiday is good for nothing.

When you are at work in school, most of you are good girls, and those who are not will, I hope, soon become so; therefore I do not grudge you the holiday you so much enjoy. Jump about, then, for it is a pleasant sight to see young people innocently happy.

I see that all of you can play; but stop just for two minutes, while I ask if you are equally good at other things. Dearly do I love young people to be useful: can you make a fire, clean up a house, and rub chairs and tables?

Can you sew, knit, mend stockings, and put a patch on a garment quickly and neatly?

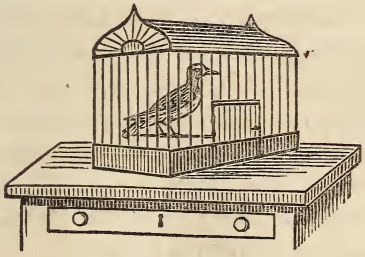
Can you wash, iron, and fold linen? Can you cook a mutton-chop, or a beef-steak? and make a pudding, a cake, and a pie-crust?

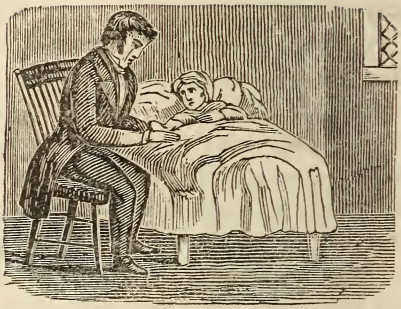
Can you tie up a cut finger properly? put leeches on a person who requires them? and dress a burn or a scald?

Can you nurse carefully and kindly, never losing your temper, nor neglecting the child under your care?

There are things more important than these, but you are all too light-hearted for me to enter upon them now. Let me hope, however, that you can reply in a satisfactory manner to the questions I have proposed; for, if you cannot, the sooner you learn to do these things the

better—not one, but all of them, for they form a part only of what young girls ought to know. All of you have not the same opportunities of acquiring knowledge; but where there is among young people a desire to be useful on the one hand, and a disposition to render assistance on the other, no one need be altogether ignorant of these things. But I will now take my leave, for I see that you are on the tip-toe for your amusements. May your most cheerful moments be free from sins, your youth and your age be spent in God's service, and the pleasures of earth be succeeded by the joys of heaven.





A CALL ON A READER OF INFIDEL PUBLICATIONS.

You must not take it amiss that I look in for a moment, as I make my accustomed call on some of your neighbours. Your habit of reading infidel books makes me feel uncomfortable on your account; for though you may not fully believe them, no one can handle pitch without being defiled. I will tell you an anecdote that I have just read, and as you have children of your own, perhaps, for their sakes, you will take heed to the lesson of instruction it contains.

Colonel Ethan Allen was an active infidel, and while his daughter received from her mother the lessons of Christian instruction, the colonel endeavoured to fill her mind with infidelity.

This daughter was taken ill, and while the colonel was looking over some infidel publications in his library, a message summoned him to her bed-side. She was evidently drawing near her latter end. "Father," said she, "I am dying; tell me, am I to believe what you have taught me, or what I have learned from my mother?"

The colonel dearly loved his daughter; he paused; he fixed his eyes on his dying child, and changed countenance, while his whole body appeared to be convulsed. At last his quivering lips uttered the words, "Believe, my child, what your mother has taught you."

Now, in reading your infidel publications, and allowing them to lie about within the reach of your family, ask yourself this question: "If my children were now on their death-beds, which should I wish them to believe—the blessed truths of the Bible, which are full of hope, and peace, and joy; or the hollow-hearted creed of infidelity, which is made up of doubt, darkness, and despair?"

A CALL ON A POOR, CONTENTED WOMAN.

Do not trouble yourself, Sukey, to reach a chair: for I am in too much haste to sit down. How does your little garden go on? Come, the rose-tree is a beauty, and the mignonette smells as sweet as a May morning. I see your trees are flourishing and your brook never fails. This little border of flowers gives you more pleasure than many find in plantations and pleasure-grounds. It is a happy thing to be content with such possessions as it pleases God to bestow.

Sukey. You may say that indeed, sir: "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith."* Here, my naughty

* Prov. xv. 16.

Nancy, in coming by squire Maitland's yesterday morning, pushed her hand through the iron rails to pluck a rose. There is no good got by picking and stealing: she was in such a hurry, and pulled it away so hastily, that a thorn has been sticking in her finger ever since.

Visitor. Indeed! I am sorry to hear that Nancy should put out her hand to take what did not belong to her. There is sin in gathering a flower which is not hers, the same in kind as in plucking forbidden fruit, and we all know what evils the latter sin has been the means of bringing into the world. Come here, Nancy, let me look at your finger. Ay, it is sadly festered. I will see if I can get out the thorn with the point of my penknife. Do not be afraid; I shall not hurt you much, I dare say; but those who do wrong must smart for it. Sin never yet answered the purpose of any being, and it never will. It is like a blooming peach with a wasp in it, that yields a little pleasure and a great deal of pain.

> Present joy and future sorrow,
> Shine to-day and shade to-morrow.

There! the thorn is out now; but stop, I must squeeze your finger a little, or it will not heal.

Sukey. Stand still, Nancy, and do not pull

away your finger in that manner. I hope it will make you remember another time.

Visitor. I believe it will do now; but let it be a lesson to you, Nancy. If you give way to the temptation of plucking flowers belonging to another, you may be led on to take things of more importance. Sin is ever stirring to discover the weakest part of our hearts, therefore we ought ever to be striving to strengthen ourselves by watching and praying and looking unto Jesus. You cannot keep yourself safe with all your strength, but God can keep you secure in all your weakness. Every sin has a thorn attached to it, and though sometimes it is neither seen nor felt for a long time, yet sooner or later it will spring up. It may not wound the finger, but it will torment the heart. David knew this, and prayed to God in these words, "Remember not the sins of my youth."* It is an excellent thing to profit by the experience of God's people. Their very errors may be made useful to us; we may gather roses of instruction from their thorny trials, at the same time that we endeavour to profit by our own. Now, Nancy, remember that the thorn which drives us from evil, is better than the flower that leads us into temptation. What the world calls

* Ps. xxv. 7.

little sins, are, in some respects, more dangerous than great ones, for the latter affright us by their appearance, whereas the former are sometimes committed before we discover them. Beware of a little sin, and you will be kept from great ones. Farewell, Nancy; whenever you find temptation too strong for you, go to Jesus for strength to withstand it. Weep, and watch, and pray, but do not sin.

Look to Jesus, watch and pray,
Then the snare shall pass away.

A CALL ON A SCOLD.

Molly, Molly, you must promise me that you will read the tract that I have brought you; for if ever woman stood in need of faithful advice, that woman must be Molly Roberts. I was ashamed to stop yesterday, when you and your neighbour were raising the street with your clamour—the disturbers of the whole neighbourhood, and the laughing-stock of all around you.

What an unlovely sight it is to see human

beings, formed for acts of kindness, giving way to such unworthy passions. There were you with your face white with anger, and Betty Tibbets with her cheeks red with rage, rating each other like furies; your hand clenched by your sides, your eyes filled with indignation, and your chins almost touching each other. When I heard the foul words that flew from your tongues, and saw the spite and bitterness with which you threatened each other, you reminded me of that passage in the word of God, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity;—it is set on fire of hell."*

It was but the other day that I heard you, as I passed, scolding your husband as loudly as you could. In former times, Molly, they used to put a scold on a ducking-stool, and taking her to the nearest horse-pond, duck her over head until she could hardly speak; and, to tell you the truth, I am not surprised that they should have done so.

It is not often that I speak angry words; but I cannot help being angry with you for making yourself hated and despised, when you might be loved and respected.

Do be advised, Molly: curb your fierce temper, and restrain your fiery tongue. Do this, or rather

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* James iii. 6.

ask God to do it for you, that you may live in peace with God, in peace with your neighbours, and in peace with your own heart.

The same advice that I give to you I shall give to your neighbour also. What is the use of plaguing each other's hearts, and making each other's lives miserable? How much better to "follow after the things which make for peace!" "Live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."*

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*2 Cor. xiii. 11.

A CALL ON A MINER.

Though you are a stranger to me, you will not take it amiss that I should call with this Testament, the precious gospel of Jesus Christ. A very good old man, who had served God many years, was sitting one day, with several other persons, eating a meal upon a bank very near a pit, and he was nearest to the mouth of it. Whilst he was eating, a pigeon, which seemed very tame, came and fluttered in his breast, and slightly pecked him. It flew away, and he did not think much about it, till in about five minutes it came again and did the same. The old man then said, "I will follow thee, pretty messenger, and see where thou comest from." He rose up to follow

the bird, and while he was away, the banks of the pit fell in, and his companions were all killed. This is a true story, and happened some years ago at a mine near Swansea, in England.

You may, perhaps, wonder that God in his providence should send a pigeon on such an errand; but does he not do more wonderful things every day for our benefit? Does he not send the sun to light us by day, and the moon and stars by night? Does he not give us flowers in spring, fruit in summer, grain in autumn, and frost and snow to fertilize the ground in winter? The morning dew and the evening breeze are a part of his manifold gifts.

Yours is a dangerous employment; but the more dangerous it is, the greater is the necessity that you should prepare for another world. If God sent a pigeon to the miner at Swansea, to save his body from destruction, perhaps this Testament may be sent by him that your soul may be saved. Read it, and pray over it, that Divine grace may make it a messenger to guide you to glory.

CALL ON ONE PASSIONATE AND HARD-HEARTED.

HARRY! Harry! I have followed you into your shop to tell you that you have acted the part of a cruel, hard-hearted tyrant. The way in which you have beaten the poor little lad, now crying at the corner, is a disgrace to you. Cowardice and tyranny too often go together; and you deserve to be pointed at for the one, and soundly punished for the other. You are hammering away at your work as though that would make amends for your cruelty; but if you do not learn to conquer your passionate temper, some day or other you will smart for it, even though you should be the best workman in the world.

John Stratford was a smith by trade, and as skilful a workman, perhaps, as ever took a hammer in hand, but his cleverness did not keep him from the gallows. He did not control his passions, and was led on to commit murder, for which crime he was hung. The iron-work of the drop on which he suffered was forged by his own hands, and the very bolt, the withdrawing of which launched him into an eternal world, was his own workmanship. Have a care, Harry, that the same passionate and cruel disposition does not bring you to the same end. I am often obliged to speak hard words to you. The Bible says, "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools;"* and, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."† Your wrath has been cruel, and your anger outrageous; but you are in God's hands, and he can smite you harder than you can smite those whom you oppress. Beware, Harry, beware!

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* Eccles. vii. 9. † 1 John iii. 15.

A CALL ON A PORTER.

You are about to start off, I see, and a pretty load that is which you are about to lift on your shoulder. I could no more carry it than I could carry a cart-load of coals. Ah, well! The back is fitted to the burden, and practice makes perfect in every line of business. It is well for those who carry all their burdens on their backs, and none in their bosoms; but one word with you before you set off.

Can you run as fast with your load as you can without it? No, that you cannot. Now a weight on the heart is heavier than a load on the back, and of all weights that we carry, sin is the heaviest. If, then, you wish to run the heavenly race set before you, to finish your course with joy, and to find the end thereof eternal life, cast away your sins; they are a dreadful burden

to carry, and get heavier the longer they are borne.

Did you ever see a thorn-bush, in the spring, so covered over with blossoms, that not even the point of a thorn could be seen? I dare say you have; but for all that the thorns were there, even in the very heart of the bush; and if you have looked on the same tree in the winter, when the blossoms were gone, you must have noticed not only that it had thorns, but also that it abounded with them.

Now this is just the case with the wicked; they have their pleasures, and sometimes appear so happy that you might almost suppose no care was in their hearts. Alas! keep your eye upon them; for as sure as the bush lost its blossoms, and exposed its thorns, so surely will their enjoyments vanish, and their sharp-pointed troubles appear. There is no text in the word of God more true than that "There is no peace unto the wicked."* You may put it down as a certain rule, that sinful possessions turn out in the end to be sorrowful companions.

"Like the crackling of thorns that just blaze and expire,
Such pleasures can satisfy never;
They give only a spark, and then all becomes dark—
The blackness of darkness for ever."

* Isa xlviii. 22.

A CALL ON A MOTHER.

I AM quite pleased in having called just now, for I see that your little girl is reading the Bible, and I know you try to explain it to her. May all the precious promises it contains be her portion.

There are many lovely sights, but there are few so lovely as a little child reading the Bible. It is beautiful to see a bee sucking the honey out of a fragrant flower, but it is far more beautiful to see a little child reading the Bible. It is beautiful to see a little bird sitting upon a lonely tree, and to hear it singing a sweet song, but it is far more beautiful to see and hear a little child reading the Bible.

It is beautiful to gaze on the innocent lamb as he frolics with his fleecy companions, up and down the hilly field in the sunshine; but a far more beautiful spectacle than that of the busy bee, the singing bird, or the sporting lamb, is the sight of a little child reading the Bible.

A CALL ON ONE AGED EIGHTY-TWO.

Visitor. With your permission I will leave a tract with you.

Old Man. Thank you, I will read it gladly; and if it be written in agreement with God's holy word, I shall prize it accordingly.

Visitor. You speak like one who is no stranger to Divine things; and you are, I hope, living a life of faith and obedience, renouncing yourself as nothing, and acknowledging God to be all in all.

Old Man. I am eighty-two years of age come next March, and God has graciously given me, among many mercies, the mercy of being made sensible of his goodness; but I am not unmindful of my infirmities. I remember once hearing an aged minister declare from the pulpit, that

when he was forty years old he considered himself so good, that he believed the temptations of Satan had no power over him; but when he arrived at threescore and ten, he was constrained to acknowledge that "Satan had a bait for old birds still." Now, sir, what the minister found at threescore and ten, I find at eighty-two—that I am a poor, weak, worthless creature, totally dependent on God's goodness and grace, feeling every day of my life, that "Satan has a bait for old birds still."

Visitor. Come, I have got something by calling upon you, well worth remembering. If I leave with you a word in season, I shall take one away with me also: may they both be blessed to the good of our souls.

A CALL ON A PENITENT SON.

Francis, I call on you, on account of the letter that you have written to your father. Your conduct had wellnigh broken his heart, but your contrition and hearty desire for forgiveness have been a cordial to his fainting spirit, and I am come, not to upbraid, but to encourage you.

Happy indeed is that pilgrim, if such an one is to be found, who, amid the thorns and briers that obstruct his pathway to a better world, can discover none of his own planting. You have sinned, and you have sorrowed, for no one can sin without sorrowing; but you have done what it would be well if every sinner under heaven would do—you have repented in bitterness and

tears, and if, as you say in your letter, you are not only desirous to obtain pardon of your father on earth, but of your heavenly Father also, be assured that your prayer will be heard. "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him."*

It may be that your past error may teach you your own weakness, and dispose you to seek strength from above. You will, I trust, be more humble, more watchful over yourself, and more frequently kneel at the throne of grace, to seek Divine support in the name of a merciful Redeemer. If a hardened transgressor has every thing to fear, a repentant prodigal has every thing to hope. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."†

There is no one in the wide world who is such a friend to you as your father, for no one loves you as he does; and no one will delight so much in your welfare. You must go to him, and you will find that his arms and his heart are ready to receive you. Nay, do not give way now, Francis, but rejoice; not that you have gone

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* Dan. ix. 9. † Isa. lv. 7.

astray, but that you are returned into the ways of righteousness and peace. No words are sharp enough for one persevering in sin, no language is too kind for the afflicted penitent. Away with the shadows that surrounded you, and welcome the brighter hope that shines on your future path. As the load is taken from your heart, let your heart rejoice; for not only is there gladness on earth, but joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

A CALL ON A HARSH PARENT.

Mr. Stanley, you must not take it amiss that I call upon you respecting your son. I know that he has sorely displeased you, that he has sadly committed himself, and that he is not so sensible of his error as he ought to be; but having known him so long, I am much interested in his welfare.

It is a blessed thing to show mercy to those who have gone astray, and to manifest long-suffering and forbearance towards them; for kindness has melted many a heart that severity would never have broken.

As a parent, you feel the unworthy conduct of your son, but I sadly fear that you take the wrong method to lead him to a proper sense of his misconduct, and to bring him back to the path of duty.

Unreasonable severity often makes an offender try to justify himself, and disposes him to think that he is the injured, instead of the offending, party. I know that he deserves your heaviest displeasure; but, alas! Mr. Stanley, if a tenth part of human offences committed against God were to be punished as they deserve, the population of the world would be thin indeed.

Our heavenly Father "hath not dealt with us according to our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities;"* otherwise we had been utterly consumed.

> Offended man indignant stands
> To smite his fellow man, nor spares;
> While God, with lightnings in his hands,
> Looks down on sinners, and forbears.

Let me beseech you, for your son's sake, nay, for your own sake, that you try a milder method. Even though he has not returned like the poor prodigal, with an humbled heart, sensible of his unworthiness, go out and meet him. Show the affection of a father even to one who is unworthy

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* Psa. ciii. 10.

to be called your son, and he may fall an humbled penitent at your feet. Children are commanded in the Holy Scriptures to obey their parents in all things; but the same Scriptures command parents also not to provoke their children to anger, lest they be discouraged.* Did Christ die for his enemies, and shall we not bear with our children? Come, Mr. Stanley, you must not be angry with me for being a little urgent in this matter. I want to see your son a contrite penitent; an humble-hearted, affectionate, and obedient child; and I think that, with God's blessing, this is more likely to be brought about by kindness than severity, by forgiveness than by punishment. It is said, that on one occasion, a pious parent, who could not prevail on a disobedient child to ask God's forgiveness for the transgression, went down on his knees himself, saying that if his son would not ask for pardon of God, he would ask it for him; but no sooner did he begin to offer up his prayer, than he found his son a broken-hearted penitent, kneeling at his side. Try the same course, Mr. Stanley; who can tell but the same Divine blessing may accompany your prayers, and that you and your son may have reason to rejoice together!

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* Col. iii. 20; Eph. vi. 4.

A CALL ON AN EARLY RISER.

If the sluggard knew what he lost, surely he would never be in bed till all the first beauty of the morning has passed away. Look at that glorious sun, the ambassador of God, clothed in purple and gold, sent to proclaim the goodness and the greatness of his Almighty Maker to an unbelieving world! Hark at that harmonious music, the rising lark is pouring from his warbling throat! These things make the mind cheerful, and bid the heart dance for joy. How sweet

is the balmy breath of the morning breezes! how green are the trees! and how fair are the opening flowers! These things are beyond value, and yet they are bartered by the sluggard for an hour or two of guilty sloth. Abraham rose early to show his willingness to obey the commands of the Almighty, even though his son was to be offered up in sacrifice. Jacob, and Moses, and Joshua, and David, were early risers. King Darius rose early when he went to the lion's den to inquire for Daniel; and the pious women did the same when they visited the sepulchre where the body of the Redeemer had been laid. He who earns his breakfast before he eats it, is sure to enjoy it; and one mouthful of early air, is better than two bottles full of physic. The sober man rises early, but the drunkard lies late; the one has money in his pocket, when the other has holes in his elbows. Give me the potato that is planted early in the morning, for though it may not grow better on that account, yet the planter will look upon it with more pleasure; therefore it pleases me to see you stirring in your garden before the shutters of some of your neighbours are open. The sound of a digging spade, the clinking of a trowel against the bricks, and the ringing of a hammer on an anvil, at five in the morning, are music to my ears. I hope you will have a capi-

tal crop of potatoes, excellent health to enjoy them, and a glowing heart gratefully to acknowledge the goodness of God.

A CALL ON A SICK WOMAN.

Well, Molly Symonds! I hope you find yourself better this mild weather. I have brought you a few comforts for your body and your soul. If you could get to the door a little with your chair, while the sun shines, perhaps it would do you good.

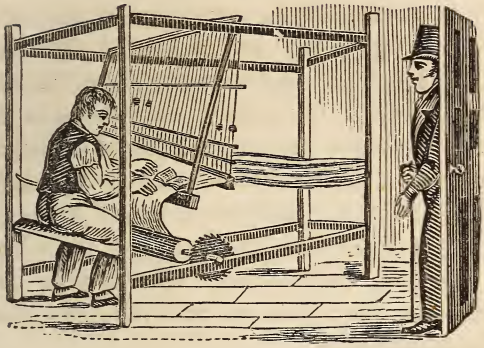
Sickness and pain are trying things, but we must endeavour patiently to bear what God is pleased to put on our shoulders; for, whether we believe it or not, it is still a truth, that all

things work together for good to them that love God. Your little habitation looks very comfortable, and your garden seems not to have a weed in it. Flowers for ornament, and herbs for use, are growing there. None but a heavenly hand could paint the one with such beauty, and enrich the other with such useful qualities.

What though we trace each herb and flower,
That sips the morning dew;
Did we not own Jehovah's power,
How vain were all we knew!

The mercies of God are continually around us in his providence and his grace, and so many tokens of his love should dispose us to trust in him at all times. Health is, to be sure, one of his greatest blessings; but even when this is withheld, there is much of comfort and joy left for those who regard this world only as a dark passage to one that is more fair and lightsome. Trials and troubles are grievous to us; but how sweet is the milk contained in the rough shell of the cocoa-nut, and how much sweeter are the consolations which God is pleased sometimes to mingle with affliction! The rebellious heart, broken by sanctified sickness and suffering, turns as a chastened child to its heavenly Father, seeking and finding that mercy which is laid

up in Christ Jesus for every repentant sinner. When your affliction has done you as much good as God intended it to do, he will remove it from you, Molly, and not before; therefore be patient, and commit yourself to the care of your heavenly Physician, that he may heal not only the injuries of the body, but also the diseases of the soul.



A CALL ON A POOR WEAVER.

Visitor. THAT's right, Moreton! I love to see a man industrious. Your shuttle goes backwards and forwards as though you were working with a right good will. The occupation of a weaver is not the most productive one in the world; but "a contented mind is a continual feast," and makes a little go a great way. How are your eyes now? I see that you wear your green shade yet.

Moreton. Yes, I am obliged to wear it for the present; but my eyes are a little stronger than they were. Thank God, I can see to work and to read my Bible, and these are mercies for which I cannot be too thankful.

V. True; to be thankful for mercies is the way to increase them. An ungodly man was once bemoaning the case of a blind Christian. "I pity you," said he; "for I think, to be blind must be one of the greatest misfortunes in the world." "True," replied the afflicted Christian; "but your visitation is much heavier than mine, for I have only the blindness of the eye to endure, while you, alas! have the blindness of the heart." So you see, Moreton, that even if your eyes should get worse, you will still have something to be thankful for.

M. To be free from blindness of heart is, indeed, a great mercy; but my manifold infirmities often make me very unhappy. I do not know how it is, but I get more and more dissatisfied with myself; and if I was not sure that the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, I should often give myself over for lost.

V. While you distrust yourself, I am not afraid; for God giveth grace to the humble. "That soul which grows most in the grace of God, grows most out of conceit with itself." The warp and the woof of your cloth are not woven more closely together than sin and the human heart; but our gracious Redeemer has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and he has won

for us a robe of righteousness, clothed in which we may appear boldly before God. "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?"* He will "give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly."†

* Rom. viii. 33, 34. † Psa. lxxxiv. 11.

A CALL ON A PROUD YOUNG MAN.

Give this note to your father, Harry, when he comes in from his work, and tell him that he must attend to it, otherwise we shall be standing still. I have long wanted to speak a word to you in private, and will now take the opportunity of so doing. You know, Harry, that your father is not very well off in the world, and you ought to know that any thing like pride and vanity in him or in you would be weak and wicked. I believe your father to be an industrious, humble-minded man; but I am afraid that you are not much disposed to follow his example. Dearly do I love to see young persons clean and neat in their dress; it is a good sign: but to give way to pride and conceit, is to render themselves hateful in the eyes of all around

them. I am afraid, Harry, that you have never thought of this in a right light; for every one who knows you is aware of your failing. If young people only knew the misery that pride has inflicted on mankind, they would start back from it as from a viper. A sparkling shirt-pin has cost many a boy his character, and a glittering pair of earrings has ruined the reputation of many a thoughtless girl; for ornaments and smart clothing lead into light company, and light company leads to ruin. How is it likely, Harry, that you will work and help your poor father as you ought to do, if you give way to the foolish conceit of adorning your person? Every one who knows your situation must be struck with your appearance. Pride is a bad companion to the rich, but it is a much worse one to the poor. To be humble is to be safe, but to be proud is to be in danger. What is it that you are looking forward to, that will warrant the high opinion you appear to entertain of yourself? Both the word of God and the experience of man agree, that "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."*

The proud in their pomp, and the vain in their folly,
Amid all their plans disappointment must know;
Their objects are selfish, their ends are unholy,
Their pleasure will shortly be turned into wo.

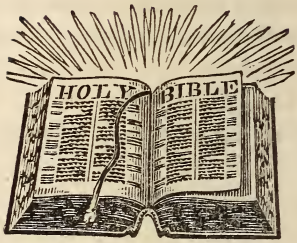
* Prov. xvi. 18.

Repining awaits them in every condition,
Though hope, like a flower, for a season may bloom;
For the visions of pride, and the dreams of ambition,
Are bubbles that burst when they come to the tomb.

Think, Harry, of what the Holy Scriptures say: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."* Ought dust and ashes to be proud? Without the grace of God, man is a perishing sinner. Ought a perishing sinner to be proud? Depend upon it, that when a man gets into the troubled waters of temptation and trial, pride is one of the heaviest mill-stones that can be hung round his neck. You must not think that I am speaking unkindly; for there is not an unkind thought in my heart towards you. I want to see you humble, industrious, and happy; and as no one can be proud and happy at the same time, so I want you to push aside the stumbling-block from your path. No one is likely to think highly of you, while you think so highly of yourself; those who know themselves cannot be proud; and those who do not, have nothing to be proud of. I cannot expect that what I have said should be pleasant to you; for your looks tell me that it is just the contrary. Most people make wry faces in taking physic, and I shall be glad if my advice should prove a medicine to you, and restore you

* Gen. iii. 19.

to a more healthy estimate of yourself. Farewell, Harry. Remember my parting remark:—Pride is an unbroken horse, that leaps headlong down a precipice; humility is a seed set in the ground, that springs up blooming and blossoming towards heaven.



A CALL ON A BIBLE READER.

Visitor. You are meditating over the blessed book of peace and mercy and wisdom, I see, as usual, Jacob. Many a crumb of comfort you get, when others are fainting for want of spiritual food to cheer them on their way through the wilderness.

Jacob. Ay, sir, you may rather call the promises of God in Christ loaves of bread than crumbs of comfort. There is in the Bible a feast of fat things for the lowliest follower of the Redeemer.

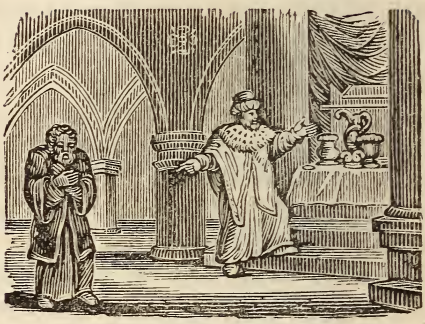
V. God has spread for us a table in the wilderness, but we are so much wrapped up in ourselves, that we devote but very few of our thoughts to his mercies. One glories in his wisdom, another in his might, and a third in his riches. In short, in any thing but the mercy and compassion of our heavenly Father.

J. When we look at ourselves, there is enough to make our eyes run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with water; but when we view the grace of Jesus Christ, in living, dying, and interceding for us, words are not sufficient to express our joy. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercises loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."* I sometimes think myself wretchedly poor, but no sooner do I open my Bible, than I find myself to be rich indeed; for it is not one thing, but all things, that are promised to pardoned sinners; for pardoned sinners, and none others, are God's people.

V. True, Jacob. I am going to call on Mary Thomas; but I could not pass your door without stepping in for a moment. Continue to trust in the promises which God has given in his Son, and your hope and your confidence will be secure.

To the Lord belong mercies, and we in our ways
Should not question his goodness, no never:
To him be the glory, thanksgiving, and praise,
Both now and for ever and ever.

* Jer. ix. 23, 24.



CALL ON A SELF-RIGHTEOUS MAN.

I HAVE never been easy since I called upon you last, Maurice; for the remarks you made gave me reason to think that you were building on a false foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;"* and if you think there is a particle within you free from sin, from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot, you are grievously deceived. Your best thoughts, words, and works are worthless with regard to salvation, unless under the influence of a lively faith in Jesus Christ.

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* 1 Cor. iii. 11.

"It has," said a learned but self-righteous man, "always been a consolation to me, when addressing the Deity about my infirmities, to feel that I had a good heart." "Then," replied an unlearned but pious Christian, "you have never yet rightly prayed to God at all; for the prayers of a good heart never reach him." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."*

If our hearts are humbled as much as they ought to be with a sense of sin, we shall have very little to say of ourselves, and very much of the love of the Redeemer.

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* Psa. li. 17.

CALL ON A BARBER.

Visitor. I WILL thank you to thin my hair a little, for I have more of it on my head than I like to have this hot weather. Yours is a pleasant situation, and I dare say that you have a good business.

Barber. If it were not for the shop opposite, where a man has set up against me, I should do pretty well, sir; but he takes many a shilling out of my pocket.

V. Ah, well, you know, he must do the best he can to get an honest penny as well as you; and perhaps he had no intention of doing you an injury. I am afraid you are taking off my hair rather too freely, for I have but little to spare.

B. It is getting rather thin at the top of your head, sir. I would advise you to use a little oil, or bear's grease, or ——

V. No, no; I never use the one or the other, for I fancy that every particle of dust would stick

to my hair if it were oiled, and I cannot bear perfume of any kind. Do you keep your shop open on a Sunday?

B. Yes, sir; many of my customers can come to me at no other time.

V. I am sorry for it; there must be something wrong, either with them or their business; but perhaps it is with both. The word of God says, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."* Now, do you really think it right to follow your calling on the Sabbath?

B. Why, I can hardly say that, sir. I wish that I could manage without it; but it is impossible, so long as my neighbours keep open.

V. There is no law, that I know of, which compels a man to do the same thing that his neighbour does; and, therefore, I should think that you might shut up shop, even though your neighbour continued to keep his open.

B. That would never do, sir; I should offend some of my best customers.

V. It is certainly not a pleasant thing to offend man; but it is a still more unprofitable thing to offend God. Though you may get a trifle by it, I would advise you to give up your Sunday business, being persuaded that "better is an handful

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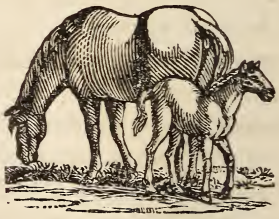
* Exod. xx. 8.

with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit."*

B. I cannot, indeed, sir, give it up; I cannot make so great a sacrifice.

V. Well, then, the case stands thus:—God commands you to close your shop, and your heart persuades you to keep it open. Now, God has never deceived you; whereas the heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."† Think of the matter as you will; this is the true state of your case. Perhaps you will give it a little reflection, for never yet did any man heartily serve God without profit, nor despise him without punishment.

* Eccl. iv. 6. † Jer. xvii. 9.



A CALL ON A COMPLAINER.

Visitor. JAMES, you look a little out of sorts this morning; what is the matter with you? I have been reading my Bible, and walking in the fields, and my spirit has been rejoicing in God's goodness, manifested alike in his word and his creation. Doubtless, there is much of trouble in the world, but there is much of mercy also; enough, as my uncle Barnabas used to say, to make a man "rejoice all day, and sing in the night."

James. I cannot see things as you do. You are always hopeful, and I am always full of fears.

Visitor. The more is the pity, that you cannot discern the goodness of God more clearly.

An old gentleman, a good friend of mine, was accustomed to use a reading-glass, his sight being very defective. One day, when in company, he pulled out his glass, wiped it very care-

fully, and laid it on the table before him. Soon after this, a little girl, who was in the room, took up the reading-glass, out of curiosity, unseen by the old gentleman, and smeared it all over with her greasy fingers, having been eating bread and butter; the glass was then put again on the table. It was not long before some drawings were produced, when my friend, having a taste for such things, took up his glass to examine them. What the company called a beautiful flower-piece seemed to him to be mere blotches of red, blue, yellow and green. What they considered to be a fine head, he could make neither head nor tail of; and what all pronounced to be one of the finest landscapes they had ever seen, appeared in his eyes a jumbling together of odds and ends. Being a free-spoken man, he expressed his unfavourable opinion of the drawings, to the no small surprise and disappointment of the company. No one could account for his dislike of the drawings, until a friend at his right hand requested to be permitted to look through his glass, when the affair was explained, to the amusement of all. "Ah, my friends," said the old gentleman, shaking his head, "no wonder that the drawings should appear to me to be defective; the mistake that I have just fallen into is too common in the world, especially with regard to the things of

God. We look at his creation, his word, and his dealings with us, through our own defective sight, and we blame that as confusion and deformity which is in truth all order and beauty. Our natural sight is like my besmeared reading-glass, and a spiritual discernment resembles the same when cleared from its imperfections. May we all seek for grace to discern things aright, that we may no longer see 'through a glass, darkly,' but clearly distinguish the things that belong to our peace, even the love of the Father and of his Son Jesus Christ."

I will leave you to ponder on the observations of the old gentleman, James; for as they have been of some use to me, they may be of some advantage to you also.

A CALL ON A PASSIONATE YOUNG PERSON.

What, Robert, is that you giving way to such an ungovernable passion? If you could only see your own face it would be enough to frighten you. Oh, how unlovely is the human form when distorted with passion! I heard you storming at your sister when I was half a dozen doors off. The words which have been spoken, and the deeds that have been done, when under the influence of sudden passion, are truly terrible. If God were to judge you as severely as you are disposed to judge your sister, how would you endure his punishments? I had rather see your face rubbed over with soot, than deformed and clouded with such deadly rage.

"Fierce is the eagle in his pride,
The vulture in the air,
The tiger in the forest wide,
The lion in his lair;

But birds of prey and savage beasts
Are not so fierce and fell,
In all their rage, as human breasts
Where evil passions dwell."

He who rides an unbroken or a vicious horse had need hold him in with a strong hand and a tight rein, to prevent his own neck from being broken; but he who is carried away by strong and unbridled passions, will most likely, one day or other, be thrown over a precipice. "When a Christian gives way to sinful passions, he dishonours his profession, grieves the Spirit of God, and makes sport for infernal spirits. Be not overcome of evil." You are old enough to know the consequences of this terrible sin. Every year it will get stronger hold upon you, and within you, if not repressed. No one will depend upon you, and you can have no dependence on yourself; for passion comes like a flood, and sweeps away affection as with a torrent. Remember that the first murderer was the brother of his victim! A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger;"* and

* Prov. xv. 1.

that "he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."* I shall call again one of these days, Robert, not in a churlish spirit, but with kindness and affection, to say a little more on the subject of anger. May God, in his mercy, take passion away from your heart, and put love in its place, that you may live in peace with God, and charity with all mankind.

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* Prov. xvi. 32.

CALL ON A DRUNKARD.

I WILL not ask you how you do, Richard; for you look bad enough, and bad enough you are likely to be. Oh that I had words shrill enough to make your ears tingle, and sharp enough to pierce to your very heart! It is of no use to speak softly and soothingly to you, for comfort I have none to offer. To what a situation have you reduced yourself! A street-beggar; your wife wretched and your children in rags; your body afflicted with disease, and your soul setting at defiance the threatenings of God. You are madly running to ruin, plunging headlong into perdition.

"The drunkard has to tread a briery way,
A path of sorrow in his latter day;

When, stung with pain, and tortured by despair,
He crawls along, compelled by turns to share,
As pining want, disease and guilt prevail,
The almshouse, workhouse, madhouse and the jail."

Richard, you are now sober; and well may you hang your head with shame, to think what you once were, and what you now are. If you look back, it must be with remorse; if forward, with despair. Which, of all the curses that sin has brought upon mankind, can the drunkard hope to escape? You are wretched enough now, but what are temporal pains compared with eternal torment? Drunkenness has robbed you of comfort, joy, peace and hope, and brought upon you distress, sorrow, distraction and despair: that soul-destroying gin has been your ruin.

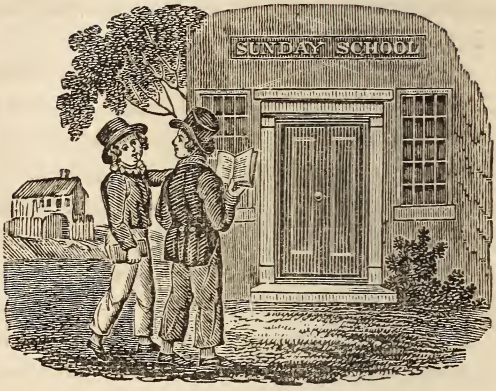
"Accursed gin! what ruin hast thou wrought;
What good prevented, and what evil brought!
Oh! would that words of kind intent could sway
The countless thousands thou hast led astray;
Win them from guilty paths so wildly trod,
And bring them back to virtue and to God!"

Can a drunkard read his Bible? Every chapter must harrow up his soul. Can he attend Divine worship? The faithful minister of Jesus Christ must be a terror to him. Can he pray? He regards God as his bitterest enemy. Debarred from the Bible, banished from the house of God,

and cut off from the consolation of prayer, he is a vagabond going to and fro on the earth, seeking rest but finding none.

I wish, Richard, that I could speak more kindly to you. I wish that I could do you a service; but how may this be? I can rebuke you, I can pity you, I can pray for you; but I cannot comfort you. While you pursue your drunken course, you will only go on from bad to worse; you are hastening to a dreadful precipice,—a gulf of unfathomable misery.

It may be, Richard, that sometimes you take up a book and read, though it be to your own condemnation. I will therefore leave you a tract, "What do you get by Gin-drinking?" and may He who, at the eleventh hour, spoke peace to the dying thief upon the cross, reprove your backslidings, heal your diseases, forgive your sins, and bestow upon you the riches of his mercy. No power, but the power of God, can reclaim you; no grace, but the grace of the Redeemer, can save you; but as the mercy of God endureth for ever, he may yet snatch you as a brand from the burning; he may yet make a saint of the sinner, renewing you by the power of his Holy Spirit, and preparing you, by sanctified affliction, for his glory.



CALL ON A SUNDAY-SCHOLAR.

Now, Alfred! if you will reach me the reward-book that was given you yesterday, I will put your name in it according to my promise. You can find me a pen and ink, I dare say. Mind and do not shake the table. Your pen is not the best in the world, but yet I have managed the matter pretty well; and that flourish at the bottom makes it look very smart. Let it be kept clean, and get all the good out of it that you can: it is a capital plan to make the best of every thing.

A school-boy once told a Christian parent that

he had obtained two prizes at school for his attainments; "and now," said he exultingly, "I have only one prize more to get, and then I shall be satisfied." "You are wrong, there, Edward," replied his father; "for there will then remain another prize to obtain of greater value than all the others put together; and you must not rest satisfied until you have got that,—'the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'"*

Now I hope, Alfred, that as you have been a busy-bee at school, you will gather honey from this anecdote. Reward-books are excellent things in their places; but if you had all that have ever been printed in the world, they would do you but little good, unless you could look forward to "the reward of the inheritance" in heaven, promised to all the followers of Jesus Christ. To this, then, let your heart be directed.

Press boldly on, though all rewards are given,
To win, through Christ, the great reward in heaven.

* Phil. iii. 14.

CALL ON A CHARITABLE NEIGHBOUR.

Mrs. Rollins, you will excuse my calling in upon you, to put you upon your guard against two or three persons to whom you exercise great kindness. You take them to be in real want; but if they are in want, it is not so much on account of their poverty as their waste and intemperance.

It would ill become me to stop the current of your charity, which I believe runs pretty freely to the habitations of the poor. I only want to direct it in a channel where it may do more good, and benefit persons more worthy of assistance. For your great kindness to the poor in this neighbourhood, I thank you; and I trust that He

who has disposed your heart to relieve the distresses of others, will abundantly bless you in your basket and your store, in your going out and coming in. It is a mercy to have the means, and a still greater mercy to possess the desire, to relieve affliction and want. Active benevolence towards mankind, done from a proper motive, is the very soul of thanksgiving to God; for it is not knowing, or talking about his commandments, but doing them in a spirit of love, that is most acceptable to him. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."*

Twice have I seen that man with the leathern cap and the old great coat, who calls upon you so frequently, reel out of a grog-shop, using language that would shock you. Now, I know it is not your intention that your money should be spent in gin. The three lads without shoes and stockings, who come begging at your back-door, shivering as though they have the ague, are three of the most graceless young scoundrels in the whole neighbourhood. I gave one of them shoes, and the other two stockings, but they never wore them; and yesterday I saw them all

* Jas. i. 27.

together, laughing and grinning as they ran off with their hands filled with fruit from an old woman's stall, which they had wilfully upset. But of all the impostors that ever abused kindness, that Peggy Lucas is surely the worst. I have made diligent inquiry about her, and find her to be a liar, a thief, and an abandoned drunkard. She carries about songs and books of an improper kind, and makes up a tale to suit every kind of customer she happens to fall in with. I used to think her husband a proper object to relieve, but I find that he and she are both alike—not a pin to choose between them. Frank Lucas stopped me the other day, after he had been drinking too freely; he put on a hypocritical air, and told me that he had neither tasted bit nor drop the whole day; and when I gave him to understand that I had no money to spare to a drunkard, he swore he had borne his poverty long enough, and that he would make quick work of it, and put an end to his misery at once in the canal. I ventured so far as to let him have his own way; but in spite of his determination to destroy himself, he convinced me yesterday, by another application, that he is much more attached to begging than to drowning.

There is in the white house, near the garden at the back of the brewery, a poor, honest, in-

dustrious woman, struggling hard to support a large family; sickness is now in the house, and my heart aches for the poor woman, whom I know to be a deserving creature. Now, Mrs. Rollins, I thought it would be no difficult matter to persuade you to give up the man in the leathern cap, and the three graceless young scoundrels, who are deceivers, as well as Frank Lucas and his wife Peggy, and to bestow what you otherwise might have given them on this poor industrious woman. I will leave the case with you, and you can act as you think proper. You will easily find the white house at the back of the brewery. It was the employment of the Saviour of the world to go about doing good, and a blessed thing it is to follow his example. "The liberal soul shall be made fat," temporally and spiritually; and "he that watereth shall be watered also himself."*

* Prov. xi. 25.

CALL ON A THOUGHTLESS YOUNG MAN.

Ah, Thomas! Thomas! all that I said to you the other day did but little good, I understand. You went to the circus yesterday, after all, with your thoughtless companions, and I dare say that now you are sorry for it. Here to-day you are stopping at home with more pains in your head, and bitter reflections in your mind, than you have money in your pocket. You ask me if no one can go to the circus without getting into mischief. I reply, When you can put your hand into a wasp's nest without being stung, or into the fire without being burnt; when you can walk barefoot on thorns without injury, or handle pitch without being defiled,—then may you hope to go into temptation with thoughtless comrades without giving yourself up to evil.

You look ashamed enough, and feel ashamed enough, I dare say, and, therefore, I will say but little, for I have no wish to speak bitter truths to you while your heart is telling you so many. For the sake of your own soul be more careful, more watchful, more prayerful, for the future. It is an error to reprove a transgressor too roughly, and another to treat him too tenderly; I would not willingly fall into either of them. Read this tract, "Advice to a Young Man on entering the World;" it may excite a desire, if God's blessing attend it, to live more consistently with his glory and your own happiness—a course that will insure peace when the summons of death shall arrive, and an abundant entrance into a heavenly inheritance. May God of his goodness show you the deformity of sin. "That heart which never saw its own desperate wickedness will lightly esteem, or totally reject, Christ's righteousness." May you be taught and guided in the way of salvation, and finally attain everlasting life, through Him who will save all that trust in his mercy.

A CALL ON A CRUEL MAN.

I was very sorry, Frank Lewis, to see you, from my window, yesterday, beating your donkey in a very unmerciful manner; and felt determined to call upon you the first opportunity, to have a word or two with you about your cruel usage of your poor beast. Kind treatment often succeeds better with animals than blows; and no one ought to strike a dumb creature until he has tried a milder method. The Scripture says that "the merciful man is merciful to his beast;" but this I am sure, that you showed no mercy to yours.

There's mercy both for man and beast
In God's indulgent plan;
There's mercy for each creeping thing,
But man has none for man.

Frank. I do not know that my donkey is used worse than other people's. Jack Holmes knocks his about from morning to night. He thinks

nothing of thumping him about the head for half an hour together.

Visitor. But if Jack Holmes has no feeling, that is no reason why you should follow his cruel example. The same Almighty Being who made you, made your donkey also, and wo be to those who abuse his creatures!

His eye surveys the world around,
The water and the land;
He frowns upon the harden'd heart,
And hates the cruel hand.

And depend upon it, that "with what measure" you "mete, it shall be measured to you again." You have power over your donkey, but remember God has power over you; and for every unnecessary stroke you inflict, he may smite you with the rod of affliction. If his hand should be heavy on you, it will be needless to complain, for your hand has fallen heavily on your unoffending beast. Take warning in time, Frank. Neither the mercy nor the judgment of God is to be despised. With the merciful he will show himself merciful,* but for the cruel, who have no pity, he has stores of terrors. Once more I say, Take warning, and have pity on your poor beast; lest the wrath of God fall upon you, and overwhelm you with destruction.

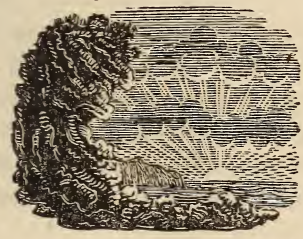
* Sam. xxii. 26.

A CALL ON ONE HEAVILY AFFLICTED.

You will not take it amiss, William Summers, that I leave you some counsel addressed "To the Afflicted;" for I know that you are one of those who would willingly glorify God in their afflictions. I have heard of your distress, and my heart has ached for you; nevertheless, if your trouble be great, the consolations of God are not small; even in this winterly season of adversity you will reap, if you faint not.

Cheer up your desponding spirit, for the sun is in the skies yet, and the moon proclaims by night the goodness of God. I can feel for you, for I know that your trial is a heavy one; but you must cast it as much as you can on Him who has promised to bear the burdens of his people. Oh,

the unutterable weight of the transgressions of a sinful world! If this was borne by our adorable Redeemer, do you think that his followers need fear being crushed with lighter trials? No; he will bear for them what they cannot sustain. Though your present calamity be exceedingly urgent, yea, though the furnace of your affliction were even heated seven times hotter than it is wont to be heated, still would I say, trust in your heavenly Father, and you shall be seen walking in the midst of the fiery trial uninjured, with a companion like unto the Son of God.



A CALL ON A FISHERMAN.

Visitor. NEVER idle, Jasper, never idle. I saw you mending your nets, the other morning before breakfast. That is the true way. Fill up the chinks of time that might otherwise be lost. You seem to understand what you are about; but while repairing your nets to catch the fish in the river, have a care that you are not caught yourself. Satan is a cunning old fisherman, and knows well, not only how to make a net, but how to use it when it is made.

Jasper. You are right enough there, sir; but though Satan knows how to make it, God knows how to break it; if it were not for this, we should all of us be caught: "As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in

the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."* But, blessed be God, there is another net besides those which are spread by the enemy of souls; for we read in Matthew's Gospel, that the kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea, which gathers of every kind.† That is a net which will never break with us; and when caught in it, the faster it holds us the better. I read the tract you left with me, and a sweet spirit runs through it. It has often been a wonder to me, how the human heart, which is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,"‡ can be so changed by Divine grace, as to pour out, as it sometimes does, so much warm-hearted love and spiritual affection; but what is there that our heavenly Father cannot perform?

Visitor. What indeed! So long as we look to him, the snares of the evil one will be spread in vain. How gloriously the sun is setting, and how beautifully bright is the heaven above us!

If thus the sky above our head,
Which God beneath his feet has spread,
With floods of living light excels,
What must the heaven be where he dwells?

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* Eccles. ix. 12. † Matt. xiii. 47. ‡ Jer. xvii. 9.

A CALL ON A PIOUS YOUNG PERSON.

You are reading your Bible, then, Joseph; ay, there's nothing like it. Make hay while the sun shines, for what you learn in youth will, with God's blessing, be a comfort to your latter days.

The bud is fragrant on the tree,
The blossom on the thorn;
The evening breeze that wanders free,
And balmy breath of morn.
Nor morn, nor eve, nor fairest flowers,
So fresh and fragrant rise,
As youthful hearts, with all their powers,
In heavenly wisdom wise.

There are a thousand books in the world, written to lead the youthful mind in paths of usefulness, piety and peace; but all of them

put together do not contain one half of what is written in the Bible to reprove the wicked, to strengthen the weak, to encourage the doubtful, and to confirm the believer in the goodness of God; therefore, let the Bible be your bosom friend. If I wanted to give a young person the most valuable present in the least possible compass, I would give him the Bible; for the truths it contains are worth more than a king's ransom.

Let the book be your guide, in word, deed, and behaviour,
In light, and in darkness, whate'er may befall,
And look up above to your God and your Saviour,
And cling to the cross as your life and your all.
Do this in your youth, and your breast shall be lighter,
In joy and in sorrow, in glare and in gloom;
Your hope and your faith in the future be brighter
And stronger, the nearer you draw to the tomb.

One reason why I wish you to love the Bible is, because you cannot, then, help loving God. If you do wrong, the Bible will rebuke you; if you do right, the Bible will commend you. No bad man ventures to be a Bible reader; and no good man dare become a Bible neglecter. The Bible is honey to the humble believer, but gall to the proud infidel. It is weakness to him who trusts in himself, but strength to him who depends on God. With the Bible, youth may

become wise; without it, old age may be passed in folly. Read, then, your Bible; pray over it, weep over it, rejoice over it, and love it; for it tells us of that merciful Redeemer who shed his blood for transgressors. If we have an interest in him, we may rejoice in the hope of everlasting life; if we have it not, we may tremble with the fear of eternal death.

A CALL ON A DOUBTER.

Visitor. I HOPE, Richard, that the clouds and darkness which have so long hid from you the face of the Redeemer, beaming with Divine compassion, are passing away, and that you can rejoice in the hope set before you.

Richard. No, sir, that is not the case. I feel, notwithstanding all the promises of God, that I am too unworthy to hope for mercy.

Visitor. Too unworthy! You must be unworthy indeed, if you are worse than those whom redeeming grace has already pardoned. Paul considered himself to be "the chief of sinners," and yet Paul found mercy.

"Come, ye weary, heavy laden;
Lost and ruined by the fall,
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all."

Richard. There are many precious invitations in God's word, certainly, but none of them seem addressed to me.

Visitor. No! that is rather strange too, if you feel the weight of your unworthiness. What do you think of these invitations: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;"* "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price?"†

Richard. But my heart is too hard; it is as hard as a stone.

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* Matt. xi. 28. † Isa. lv. 1.

Visitor. Is it? then there is a promise in the Bible that will just suit you: "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh."*

Richard. Sins such as mine, in my opinion, are not to be pardoned.

Visitor. The word of God, which is better than the opinion of man, says, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins."† "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."‡

Richard. I am not only a sinner, but a backslider.

Visitor. It is indeed a grievous thing to be a backslider; but grievous as it is, the forbearance of God extends itself to this case also. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely."§

Richard. You do not know my weakness; I have no strength in me.

Visitor. If I do not know your weakness, I know my own; and if you really have no strength in yourself, perhaps you will be the more ready to say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength."‖

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* Ezek. xi. 19. † 1 John ii. 1. ‡ 1 Tim. i. 15.
§ Hos. xiv. 4. ‖ Isa. xlv. 24.

Richard. I am always in bondage through the fear of death.

Visitor. Alas! that is the case with thousands; but if you are desirous to get rid of this fear, call upon the name of the Lord, he will give you faith, as he has given it to thousands of fearful saints before you, to say, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."*

Richard. If I had that faith one hour, I verily believe that I should depart from it the next.

Visitor. Not if God's promises to his people are true; for the Lord of life and glory hath said, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."†

Richard. You seem to have a salve for every sore; but, after all, I fear that Jesus Christ will not be willing to save me.

Visitor. I do not know what proof of his willingness you require; but if the fact that he offered up himself on the cross a sacrifice for sinners be not a proof strong enough, it is not likely that you will ever be favoured with a stronger. Richard, Richard, take these things to heart. Dishonour not God by unbelief. Seek the throne of grace

*Ps. xxiii. 4. † Jer. xxxii. 40.

humbly, hopefully, confidingly, that doubts and fears may be taken away, and that hope and peace, and joy, and praise may abide with you continually.

A CALL ON A YOUNG REPROBATE.

A word in passing, Richard. A day or two ago I saw you making game at the poor idiot boy who lives in the neighbourhood. I had no time to stop and speak with you then, but one word I will leave with you now.

To see an idiot moping away the hours of his youth, without the power of doing any thing for himself, or those around him, is a sad sight; but for all that, it is a much sadder sight to see a boy, blessed with his faculties, and endued with the

ability and opportunity to serve himself and others, wasting his youth in idleness and sin; leading his companions to ruin, and plunging himself headlong into destruction. This is a sight at which men may well tremble, and angels look on with wonder and abhorrence. The poor lad that you ridiculed is entitled to pity; but when I call to mind the youth that you are wasting, the blessings you are abusing, and the punishments you are bringing on yourself, I cannot help thinking that you, Richard, are a greater idiot than he is.

A CALL ON A SIMPLE-HEARTED CHILD.

Is little Mary at home? Oh, I see you are here, sitting at your book all by yourself, though I dare say that your mother is not far off. I believe that you are a simple-hearted, teachable child, and I wished, as I passed by, just to tell you what I think will please you.

A little girl, about eight years old, brought up by pious parents, came running to her mother one day, weeping. "Mother," said she, "I am very unhappy; for though I read my Bible, and pray to God through Jesus Christ, my heart is very heavy. Sometimes, when I look up at the clear blue sky, I think that I shall go there; but

at other times my mind is dark as night, and then I think that I shall go to a wicked place. If God loved me, I do not think he would let me be tried in this way. No; he would tell me, at once, that I should be sure to go to heaven."

"My child," replied the mother, "whom God loveth he chasteneth. He knows that his children are too weak to bear much, and therefore he does not tell them all his mind. He gives them fears to make them afraid of hell, and precious promises that they may long after heaven.

"Thus God, beneath his watchful eye,
His children still will keep,
To make them humble in their joy,
And hopeful when they weep.

"Yet fear not thou; though doubts arise,
No doubt need e'er remain;
For those who trust in Christ on earth,
With Christ above shall reign."

The little girl wiped her eyes, and cleared her cloudy brow. "Thank you, mother," said she, "I understand it now, and hope that I shall never again want to know what God thinks it right to keep back from me, but go on trusting my Saviour's grace and mercy for ever." I see, Mary, that this little account has pleased you; try to remember it, and one of these days, perhaps, I may call round and tell you of something else.

CALL ON A POSITIVE MAN.

You were too positive by half, the other day, when I left a tract with you. I thought at the time you must be wrong, but since then I have been convinced of it. Now, do try to get the better of your positive spirit. It is no disgrace to own a mistake, though a very great one to persist in it. The other day I met with the following paper, written by an humble-minded

man. I will leave it with you for your future benefit.

"Some people find it a very hard thing to say, 'I was mistaken;' and will persist in error rather than give up a point, or alter a practice, even when convinced that they are wrong. This is a very foolish sort of pride. The wisest of men are most deeply convinced of their own ignorance and liability to err; consequently they are the most humble and candid. He who owns himself to have been in an error, only proves himself wiser than he was before: but 'seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him.' My whole life has been spent in discovering my own ignorance and mistakes, and endeavouring to correct them; and now that I am an old man, instead of finding more reason than formerly to trust myself, I am every day more and more convinced of the necessity of praying for constant guidance, instruction, and correction from God. This is my daily prayer—'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'* I hope and trust I shall not be found mistaken at last.

* Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

A CALL ON A YOUTHFUL FRIEND.

How are you, James; how are you? Now I have only five minutes to spare, and in that five minutes I will tell you a tale.

A father once set out with his son on a visit to a neighbouring village, that lay at a little distance from the place where they were; but instead of keeping the turnpike-road, the father purposely entered on a common, here and there spread over with brambles and gorse bushes, where he wandered backwards and forwards for some time. The son was very patient, but at last he cried out, "Father, it is not at all likely that we shall get to the village so long as we wander among the thorn and bramble bushes." "If you think

so," said the father, "we will leave the common directly;" so once more he got into the turnpike-road.

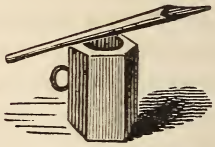
Not long after he took his son into a large garden, where abundance of fruit and flowers grew. This pleased the boy very much; but, after a time, he once more cried out to his father, "I do not see that we are much nearer the village than we were before, and we shall never get there while we stop in this garden, that is certain."

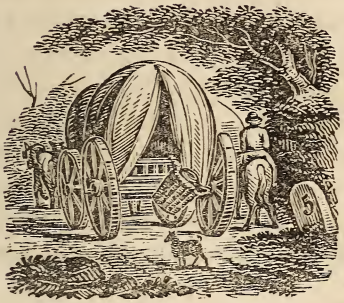
"That being the case," said the father, "it will be very foolish to idle away our time here any longer;" so getting again into the turnpike-road, he went straight forward to the village. On returning home again, the son began to question his father: "Father, what made you go into the garden, and among the brambles and thorn bushes," said he; "when the only way to get to the village was to keep straight along the turnpike-road?"

"To tell you the truth, my boy," said the father, "I did it to teach you a lesson, and to point out the folly of seeking for a thing in a place where it is not likely to be found. You have been quick enough to perceive this folly in my conduct, take care that you never let me see it in your conduct. As you proceed on your

earthly pilgrimage, the roses of pleasure will bloom on the right hand, and on the left will grow the thorns and briers of discontent; linger not among either of them, but travel straight forward along the turnpike-road of duty, and you will find that happiness which otherwise you will look for in vain."

Remember this story, James, and then, perhaps, you will some day be thankful for having listened to it.





A CALL ON A FATHER OF CRUEL CHILDREN.

Mr. Lewis, it is not a pleasant thing to make a complaint to a father about his children, but I have just met your two boys sitting on the top of your little loaded cart, drawn along at a gallop by a lean dog, that looks for all the world as though he were half famished. Oh! here they come, and with your leave, I will speak to them before you.

Do you think it right, boys, when your cart is loaded, to get to the top of it, and compel that poor, wretched-looking dog to drag you along at a gallop? I am ashamed of such cruelty, and trust that your father will prevent it in future. There is quite enough in the cart, without your making it heavier.

I knew a child that used, when he heard a carriage approaching, to jump up to the window to see if the number of the horses were the same as the number of the wheels. "Dere," he would say, "a coach wid four wheels, and only two horses, dat's wrong;" then, again, on another occasion, "Dere! a coach wid four wheels, and four horses, dat's right." Now, the notion held by this little fellow that a carriage with four wheels ought to have four horses to draw it, however simple it might be, was much more merciful than the one you seem to entertain.

Get out of the cart, and do not be so hard-hearted. Look at your poor dog lying down, panting, and lolling his tongue out of his mouth. If you knew what it was to be urged past your strength, you would have some compassion on the poor brute. This is not using, but abusing the animal creation. If ever, in the course of your lives, you should serve a hard-hearted master, perhaps your present cruelty may come to your remembrance.

There is an All-seeing Eye, which regards every action you commit; and He who formed that dog, is not ignorant that you have abused his creature. Be persuaded, then, to act more kindly in future, remembering that God can not only forgive those who repent of their evil deeds, but

visit also, with his heaviest displeasure, those who continue in the practice of cruelty and oppression.

To every living thing be kind;
The merciful shall mercy find;
While cruel hearts, in evil hour,
Will surely feel that God has power.

A CALL ON A BAD HUSBAND.

Visitor. Well, Giles, how are you going on now?

Giles. Nothing to brag of; work is slack enough, and wages little or nothing; and my Turk of a landlord will have his rent if we lie on the boards. I mended a pair of shoes last week

that I cannot get paid for; and my wife plagues my heart out, because I cannot keep her like a lady.

Visitor. But how wretchedly you keep your room, Giles! When I came, the bed was not made, the room was unswept, the window unopened! I wonder how you can live in this plight; there can be no comfort in it.

Giles. You may say that, sir; my wife has no comfort in her. If she can get a drop of whisky, then she is happy; but when she cannot, there is no peace. She is either scolding the boys, or rating me like a pickpocket from morning to night. A wife ought to know better.

Visitor. I dare say she does *know* better; the misfortune is that she does not *do* better. She should make you comfortable.

Giles. Yes, sir, so everybody says. What is a wife good for, if she cannot see to things properly? A wife ought to be industrious, and not to let the grass grow under her feet. She ought to be as clean as a new penny. She ought to stay at home, and not go out gossiping and tattling by the hour together. She ought to keep her room like a little palace. She ought to see that her husband's things are kept tidy, and the children's things too. She ought to attend to her own business, and set a proper example. She ought to———

Visitor. Well, well, well, Giles; that's quite enough about your wife, in all conscience. You seem to know very well the duties of a wife, but are you quite as well acquainted with those of a husband; and do you practise them? Ay! ay! Giles; no one knows where the shoe pinches so well as he who wears it. You tell me by your looks, if I did not know it before, that your conscience is very far from being clear on this point. It is the duty of a husband to set his wife an example of industry, sobriety, integrity, and piety. If you are idle, your wife will be idle too; if you drink whisky, whisky will be drunk by her; if you run into debt needlessly, she will be sure to help you; and if you live without God in the world, unless Divine grace arrest her steps, she will accompany you to destruction. If you will read this tract, Giles, and think a little less of your wife's failings, and a little more about your own, I shall not despair of seeing you more comfortable the next time I call. Giles, ask forgiveness of God, seek the grace of the Redeemer; for when we rob God of his glory, by our neglect of his commandments, we rob our own souls of that peace which none but God can bestow.

CALL ON A RETIRED CHRISTIAN.

How do you do, Stephen?—reading a tract, I see. These little messengers of love flutter their wings, and fly about on errands of mercy everywhere now. What is that one you are reading, Stephen?

Stephen. It is Burder's tract "On the Lord's Prayer;" and a good thing it would be if every one read it who repeated that prayer, in our own country and in other lands.

Visitor. I think so, too, Stephen; and let us be thankful that it has been read by thousands and thousands of people. The Christian finds prayer a comfort in all he does, whether for his own good or that of others. What a mercy it is, that "we have not an High-Priest which cannot

be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but, on the contrary, one who suffers us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need!"* Are we poor? The silver and the gold are his, and the cattle on a thousand hills. Are we weak? He is mighty, yea, almighty,

"And strong to deliver,
And good to redeem,
The weakest believer
That hangs upon him."

Are we ignorant? His Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Are we friendless? He is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Are we in trouble? He is the Comforter, the God of all consolation. In life, in death, in time, and in eternity, he is all-sufficient. Well, then, may we pray to him.

"The prayer inspired by Him above,
Who rules and reigns, whose name is Love,
Will tranquillize the suffering soul,
When waves of worldly trouble roll.
Prayer is a blessed employ, that throws
A heavenly beam on earthly woes,
And gives the wretched and oppressed
Assurance of eternal rest."

* Heb. iv. 15, 16.

"They who pray most in the spirit, obey least the motions of the flesh." May we, then, be helped by Divine assistance to pray without ceasing.

CALL ON A FEEBLE-MINDED CHRISTIAN.

Visitor. I HAVE brought you a book, Andrew, calculated to strengthen your mind, and to do you good under your heavy trial. A sailor in a storm looks not so much to the roaring billows, as to the good ship which enables him to surmount them; and God's people, in like manner, should regard their troubles less than the God of all consolation, who can sustain them under every calamity.

Andrew. You are right; but I am so feeble-minded, that the lightest blow from the hand of affliction makes me stagger. I know that it ought not to be so; but I seem to have no strength.

Visitor. Christian men should not be behindhand with worldly men in enduring calamity. Let me tell you of a circumstance of which I have just been reading. A wild-fowl shooter, on a low flat shore, pursued his game with such ardour, that before he was aware of the tide coming in, he was surrounded by the water. In whatever direction he ran he was compelled to return, till at last he was cooped up in a little space which every moment grew less. Being a man of some self-possession, he stuck the barrel of the long gun he had with him deep into the mud, and resolved to hold by it until the ebbing of the tide. As he well knew that a common tide would not rise higher than his waist, he considered himself pretty safe, though very uncomfortably situated. The water came nearer and nearer, till it covered the spot on which he stood, and then rippled over his feet. Soon after, it gained his knees, his waist and his bosom. Some circumstances of an uncommon kind occurred to make the tide rise higher than ordinary, and button after button disappeared, till the water ran over his shoulders. What a situation.

"One wide water all around him,
All above him one black sky."

This was enough to try the stoutest heart; and

as he could not tell how much higher the waters might rise, he gave himself over for lost. Life, however, is too precious to be parted with without a struggle, and he held fast by his long gun, that he might not be borne away by the flowing waters. After remaining for some time in this fearful and almost hopeless situation, he suddenly thought that he saw the uppermost button of his coat begin to appear, and never sure was man so delighted at the sight of a button. It was long before he was quite certain that the button was fairly above the water, the waves being blown against him by the wind. At length a second button appeared, then a third, and, by degrees, the whole of his dress. As the waters fell, his spirits rose, so that he was able to sustain himself by means of his gun till he could walk with safety to the shore. Now, if a man, deriving no support from religion, could, under such trying circumstances, manifest presence of mind, how much more ought a Christian calmly to endure the greatest dangers. Let the floods of affliction come upon him, let the waves of trouble roll around him, he should still cling to that hope which is "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," even the hope of salvation through his Saviour Jesus Christ; nothing doubting that He who holds the sea in the hollow of his hand, will,

in his own time, rebuke the overwhelming flood, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."*

Andrew. While you are talking with me, I feel as strong as though I had faith to remove mountains, and power to bear tribulation without murmuring; but when left to myself, I shall again, I fear, be weak as water.

Visitor. I hope that I shall not leave you by yourself, but that you will have His presence, who can not only weaken the strongest opposer of his will, but also strengthen the weakest believer who trusts in his mercy.

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* Job xxxviii. 11.

CALL ON A YOUTHFUL READER.

Visitor. WHAT a heap of books you have about upon the table! Some of them of little worth, I fear, judging by the first I have taken up. This book of riddles contains many very silly things. Did you ever read "The Believer's Riddle?"

Youth. No, sir. I do not know what you mean.

Visitor. It is a book full of riddles of a different character to those that this little book contains. The riddles are all taken from the Bible; but I will give you one of them.

"I'm sinful, yet I have no sin;
All spotted o'er, yet wholly clean:

Blackness and beauty both I share,
A dismal black, a heavenly fair."

Can you at all make out the meaning of it?

Youth. No, sir, that I am sure I cannot.

Visitor. Well, then, I will explain it to you. A believer in Jesus Christ, one who has been convinced of sin, and who has fled for refuge to the cross, and found mercy, is still a sinner; for all men have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; but yet he is without sin, because God has accepted the atoning sacrifice of his Son for every truly repentant sinner. He is spotted over with the leprosy of evil, for all men have become altogether filthy, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet; but he is wholly clean, because he is washed, and purified, and made white in the fountain opened for uncleanness. He is black as midnight, when considered in himself, but fair as heaven itself when regarded in the Redeemer. And now, having explained one riddle to you, perhaps you will be the more ready to find out another yourself. I will, therefore, leave one with you, and you can tell me your opinion on it when I see you again.

"The work is great I'm called unto,
Yet nothing's left for me to do:
Hence for my work Heaven hath prepared
No wages, yet a rich reward."

CALL ON ONE SETTING A BAD EXAMPLE.

Visitor. Come, I have caught you just as you are going out. How is it, Timothy, that you set your neighbours so bad an example? Here are you, on God's holy day, selling newspapers, as well as all kinds of trumpery publications; thus drawing away the hearts of those around you from Divine things. This is a bad way of getting a living. You are deceiving yourself, if you suppose that it will answer your purpose. Your father, Timothy, was a God-fearing man, and would have shrunk from setting so bad an example.

Timothy. I do not see what my example has to do with other people. It is not at all likely that other folks will trouble their heads about what I

do. If I was a great man it would be another thing.

Visitor. You are wrong, Timothy, altogether; not only in acting as you do, but also in concluding that no one will be injured by it. Look around you, and you will see the effect of example. If a man comes into a neighbourhood and sets up a public-house; if he hoists up the sign of the Fighting Cocks, sands his kitchen floor, keeps a cheerful fire in the grate, hangs the newspaper over the window curtain, piles up his glasses and decanters in the window, so that they may be seen through the opened door, and has "Dealer in Foreign Spirits" painted on the front of his house, I will be bound for it that you will soon hear the voice of thoughtless beings revelling in intemperance, and soon see the reeling step of the drunkard as he staggers away from his reckless companions. On the other hand, let a place be built for the performance of Divine worship; let a conscientious, faithful, zealous minister of the gospel stand up in the pulpit, and in a few Sabbaths you will behold a goodly congregation. The influence of example is great in spreading what is good, or in extending what is evil, and your bad example, I am afraid, will corrupt many, and your bad conduct will injure yourself.

Timothy. I cannot say that I am much afraid of the one or the other.

Visitor. That may be, but you are none the safer on that account. A man's house may be undermined, and he may not know it; a pestilence may be in the air, and he may not see it; an evil may approach, and he may not fear it: but these things are not the less fearful on that account. When the ostrich buries her head in the sand, she does not, thereby, hide herself from the hunter; nor will your despising God's judgments preserve you from the danger of destruction. But I will say no more. This tract, "Sabbath Occupations," may point out to you a more profitable way of spending the day of sacred rest. Without God's blessing it will do you no good; but with the influence of his Holy Spirit it may remove the scales from your eyes, that you may discern the things that belong to your peace. It is not right with the soul, if it be not looking to Jesus to be saved from all sin. From the power as well as the guilt of sin, good Lord, deliver us.

CALL ON ONE IGNORANT OF HIS OWN HEART.

Visitor. I AM come for the tract that I left with you, Jeffrey, and hope that you and your wife have read it, that I may change it for another.

Jeffrey. Yes, I have read the tract; but it tells me a good deal more than I can take in. It tells me that I have got a bad heart. Now, I do not mean to say that I am better than my neighbours; but my heart is not so bad as this tract makes it out to be.

Visitor. If your heart is not bad, it is the only good one, unchanged by God's grace, that I ever heard of. What the tract tells you is quite true, Jeffrey.

Jeffrey. I believe that if my heart had any thing bad in it, I should know it.

Visitor. That is not quite so certain as you may suppose. Many a time have you been in a dark cellar without seeing a single spider or a cobweb there; but if you had taken a candle and searched it well, no doubt you might have found plenty of both the one and the other.

Jeffrey. Yes, but my heart is not like a dark cellar, wherein one can see nothing. It is more like this room, wherein one can see every thing.

Visitor. Well, we may liken it to this room, if you please; and yet I say that there may be much in it of which you are ignorant.

Jeffrey. I cannot understand that. If you can prove that there is any thing in this room that I cannot see in the broad daylight, then I will believe, and not before, that I am ignorant of many things that are in my heart.

Visitor. Agreed, Jeffrey. Now, can you see that ten thousand times ten thousand particles of dust are flying about before your eyes, and that the whole room is filled with them?

Jeffrey. No, I cannot; and for a pretty good reason, for I believe that it is not the case.

Visitor. Come here, then, and look attentively at this sunbeam, which darts into the room through the keyhole. You see that there are myriads of particles all in commotion; put your hand before the keyhole, and keep out the sunbeam. There! now you cannot see a speck of dust. Take your hand away again. See, they are as thick as before. The sunbeam has showed you that the room contains more than you were willing to believe. This is just the case with the heart, Jeffrey. The natural discernment is not sufficient to show us the evil it contains; but when the Spirit of God instructs us, when a beam from above descends upon us, and renders visible the evil within us, we

find that the heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."* I will leave the tract with you a little longer; give it another reading. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."†

CALL ON A YOUNG BIBLE READER.

THOMAS, I have brought you a book; and, next to the Bible, one of the most useful books that ever was printed. No Bible reader should be without it; for it enables us to consult, to compare, and to understand the different passages of the Holy Scriptures much more easily than we

* Jer. xvii. 9. † 1 John i. 8, 9.

could do without its assistance. The book is an index to the Scriptures, and is called a Concordance.

A friend once gave me one of the very same kind, "Cruden's Concordance," and I cannot tell you the comfort it has been to me. Before I had it, hours and hours were frequently consumed in the vain attempt to find different passages of Scripture, which my memory did not perfectly retain; whereas, by the help of the Concordance, I can now find almost any text in the Bible or Testament in two minutes. When I have occasion to use the book, I turn back its green-grained cloth cover with a grateful emotion, well knowing it has been to me one of the most acceptable and useful presents that I ever received.

The more you use the book, the more valuable will it become to you. If you desire that the "word of Christ" should "dwell in you richly, in all wisdom;" if you would become "mighty in the Scriptures," use your Concordance. Neither that nor any other book, without God's blessing, can do you good; but with it your Bible and your Concordance will be the most useful books in the world.

A CALL ON A CARPENTER.

One word with you, James, while you go on with your employment. When I look at your chest of tools, your dry, comfortable shop, and the work that you have in hand, I consider that you ought to be one of the most contented men in the whole street; and yet I always find you ready to repine. We should have no complaining, James, either on our lips or in our hearts; for a repining spirit is a reproach to the breast that it inhabits. We can throw a trifle cheerfully into the old hat of a grateful beggar; but if we know one who remembers to whine over his troubles, and forgets to return thanks for what is given him, we pass him by in disgust as an unthankful vagabond. Now, we are all beggars even for our daily bread, and if we obtain it at the hands of our heavenly Fa-

ther, the blessing ought to be gratefully acknowledged.

You expect to find every thing as smooth and as even as two sawn boards; but it never was so, and it never will be so as long as you are a carpenter. If your work goes on ever so smoothly, now and then your saw will grate against a nail, and the sleekest board will have a knot in it; and so it is with life. Use your tools as you may, your plane will get out of order; and drive your nails ever so carefully, some of them will go awry. You must expect these things, and not be put out of temper by them. You have an industrious wife, good health, and plenty of work, and no man ought to be happier. Many, with less than you get, have a family of half-a-dozen children to support; and you have neither chick nor child. Now, be persuaded to look at things with a more cheerful and a more grateful spirit. It is astonishing what a hopeful, persevering disposition does for a man. It is, with God's favour, the making of him. A man once told me what such a disposition did for him: "I was a poor sawyer," said he, "but I kept up my spirits, and felt determined to get on in the world. I at first worked at the bottom of the saw-pit, then at the top, then bought the piece of timber that I stood upon; after that I turned wheelwright, then carpenter, and at last

builder, and I am now a thriving man with a wife and twelve children." Now, there is a man for you! and here are you, with no one in the world to provide for but yourself and your wife, complaining and repining as though no one was so hardly dealt with as yourself. I tell you what, James, if the love and grace of God ruled in your heart, you would be ten times more grateful for his mercies. The whole world cannot satisfy an unthankful spirit. If you regarded God as your heavenly Father, and believed that he gave his Son to die for you on the cross, you would see that the same love that moved God to give us heaven and eternal happiness, also leads him to give us our daily bread: you would trust in him, you would obey him, you would praise him, and be satisfied that he would do all things right concerning you. Think of this, James; think of this! The presence of God will drive away the dark clouds of repining, and the love of God will cure ten thousand troubles.

CALL ON ONE FOND OF SINGING.

Visitor. How are you, Gilbert? light of heart, I perceive, whatever troubles you may have to contend with. It does me good to hear any one sing at his employment, especially if he be a singer of the songs of Zion. There are many happy seasons in the experience of true Christians; seasons when a sense of God's goodness and unspeakable mercy so melts their hearts, that, unable to utter their gratitude to the Father of mercies in common language, they burst out into a hymn of thanksgiving, a song of praise:

"When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys;
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

"Oh how shall words, with equal warmth,
The gratitude declare
That burns within my ravished heart!
But Thou canst read it there!"

Gilbert. To sing with the spirit and the understanding is indeed a pleasant thing; and there is no reason, when the hands are employed usefully, that the heart should not be employed gratefully. I like singing for two reasons: the one, because it keeps up the tone of my spiritual affections; the other, because it convinces those around me that a follower of the Redeemer may have a cheerful heart.

Visitor. You are right, Gilbert; your singing has drawn me in for a moment, when otherwise I should have passed by. More frequently, in my walks, do I hear the song of the drunkard than the song of Zion; for the injunction of the apostle is not frequently regarded: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."* Good day, Gilbert! may the love of Christ, which is the very spirit of praise, ever animate your heart.

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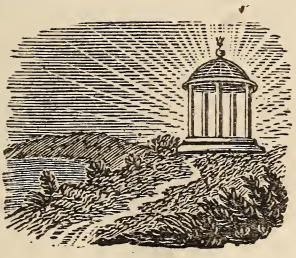
* Col. iii. 16.

CALL ON A LOVER OF NATURE.

This is a glorious morning, my young friends; and the brightness of your eyes tell me how heartily you enjoy it. The works of nature always look more lovely when we consider them as the gifts of our heavenly Father, who is equally bountiful in his providence and his grace.

Like the sun, rise betimes, and delight in spreading abroad the glory of God. Like the moon, go on peacefully in the discharge of your duties. Like the stars, preserve order and keep in your proper place. When the sunbeams shine, rejoice in your mercies; when the rain

descends, be sorrowful for your sins. Let the birds of the air lead your eyes and your heart towards the skies; let the beasts dispose you to regard the beauties of the earth, and the fishes draw your admiration to the wonders of the mighty deep. Let the returning seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter, teach you to be regular and punctual in your engagements; and let your books remind you of the best of all books, which is the Bible. Thus let every thing that meets the eye minister to the improvement of your heart, and the excellences of this world be instrumental in preparing you for the glories of that which is to come.



CALL ON ONE PROUD OF HIS DRESS.

Come, Arnold, we have no time to lose! The meeting begins exactly at twelve o'clock, and we must be punctual to a minute. I am glad to see you ready, but you look a little finer than I like a young man to appear. Neatness in dress is commendable, but not finery. When young women pay more attention to the outside of the head than the inside, and young men are more careful of their shirt-fronts than of the hearts that beat beneath them, it is no good sign. It must be rather an humbling thought to those who are fond of dress, to consider that the respect they obtain is not paid to them, but to their clothes.

I once heard that a gentleman's servant of the name of Simon, who was considered silly, was found bowing and scraping to his master's ward

robe. His master asked him how he could be such a fool as to act in so silly a manner? "For the matter of that," replied Simon, "I am not a greater fool than my neighbours, for they all bow to a handsome suit of clothes, and turn up their noses at a suit that is threadbare. If you doubt this, master, let me put on your clothes, and you dress yourself in mine for awhile, and we will go and seek our fortunes together, and see who will have the most respect paid to him." The gentleman by no means relished this proposal, and was often heard to say, afterwards, that silly Simon was one of the shrewdest men he had about his premises.

This tale will not burden your memory much, if you remember it; and it may perhaps dispose you to estimate more properly the decorations of the body, and render you more desirous to adorn your heart with kind affections, and your spirit with Christian graces. It is of no use our attending meetings formed to extend the Redeemer's kingdom, if the love of the Redeemer be not in your bosoms. If we love him, we shall obey and imitate him, and be more anxious to adorn the doctrines of God our Saviour, than to decorate our bodies with proud apparel. But come, we must move onwards, not having a moment to lose.

A CALL ON THE LAME.

Visitor. This is a pleasant evening, Mr. Johnson, and I see that you are disposed to make the most of it by walking out.

Mr. Johnson. Yes; for it is a glorious sight to see the setting sun. I cannot take so much exercise as those who are upright, but God is merciful to me; he suits the back to the burden.

Visitor. In his goodness he can make amends for every bodily infirmity. Though you are

halt, he can make you "run without weariness, and walk without fainting," in the way of his commandments. We make sad mistakes when we judge of the state of our fellow sinners by their outward circumstances. A domestic in the royal household once pitied a poor Christian, and boasted of his own better fortune, saying that he had the promise of the king to keep him in his service. "Pity me not," meekly replied the humble servant of Christ; "for I have the promise of the King of kings that I shall reign with him in glory." Now if you are blessed with the favour of God, like this poor Christian, you stand in no need of pity; for it is better to go halt into eternal life, than, having the use of your limbs, to run headlong the downward road to destruction.

Mr. Johnson. Very true, sir. I am quite satisfied, unworthy as I am, that my infirmities have been the means in God's hands of keeping me from many sins and many sorrows. They have another good effect, too; they teach me to feel for all that are afflicted in like manner.

Visitor. Ay, that is one of the special uses of affliction. A friend once told me, that he did not know whether for several years he had met with more than a dozen people with crutches, till having the misfortune to break a rib, it was

necessary for him to use crutches himself. The very first time that he went out with them, he was surprised to find so many people in the streets hobbling about like himself; but afterwards, he was convinced that no more people used crutches than formerly, and that it was his own infirmities which had opened his eyes and his heart to notice the infirmities of his fellow men.

Mr. Johnson. It is the very same with me. Time has been, when, no doubt, I passed by many who were as lame as I now am without noticing them, but it would be difficult for a lame man to pass me now unobserved. I have been so long halt, that I am quite reconciled to my infirmity. He who has withheld from me the proper use of my limbs, has put his peace into my heart, and his praises into my mouth.

Visitor. Ay, that is a mercy indeed. I fancy, Mr. Johnson, that it has been God's grace, and not the long period of your affliction, that has reconciled you to your infirmities. When a sinner knows that Christ died for him, whether he be halt, or whether he be whole, nothing can keep him from singing the praises of the Lamb that was slain. "The whole life of a Christian should be nothing but praises to God. We should neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, nor

talk, but as doing all to God's glory and praise." But I am going a different road to the one you are about to take. Good afternoon, Mr. Johnson, good afternoon.

A CALL ON AN UNGODLY PARENT.

Thomas Brindley, you must not be angry with me for what I am going to say. If I knew how to do you a kindness I would willingly set about it directly; and, indeed, it is my desire to do this in speaking to you about your children. Do, Thomas, do be persuaded to set them a better example, and to bring them up in the fear of the Lord.

They will soon be stout boys, and ought to be

doing something for your benefit, as well as their own; but, instead of this, they are either wasting their time in idleness, or running into every kind of mischief and sin.

Thomas, I must speak plainly to you, for I wish you well with all my heart. You are not thriving, and the probability is, that you never will thrive, unless it shall please God, of his infinite compassion, to enlighten your eyes, to influence your heart by his grace, and teach you the way of salvation through Jesus Christ; for, until then, I am afraid you will never see the advantage of industry, sobriety, and integrity.

What will become of your children if you should be summoned suddenly from the world? When I see them, as I frequently do, with their bare legs begrimmed with dirt, their faces unwashed, and their hair uncombed, playing street games, hooting and hallooing after some dog which they have been tormenting, or some donkey which they have unmercifully belaboured with their sticks, I think to myself—Well, there is one gracious and merciful Almighty Being, who can turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; and he may, of his boundless compassion, yet direct aright the erring feet,

and bestow his grace on the erring hearts of these thoughtless and disobedient children.

He pardons much, and suffers long,
Before he bends his fatal bow;
There never was a heart so strong,
But he could work its overthrow.

You blame your children; but how can parents, who do that which is wrong, expect their children to do that which is right. When a bird teaches its young ones to fly, it flies on before to set them the example. Take a lesson then from the poor bird, and let your children see in you a proper pattern to imitate. If, Thomas Brindley, you could be prevailed on to follow Christ, your children might be persuaded the easier to follow you; and how much better would it be to lead your children in the paths of holiness, than in the way of destruction. "A peaceful conscience, a happy heart, a holy life, and a joyful prospect through death, all spring from faith in a once despised and crucified, but now risen and glorified, Lord and Saviour." May the Holy Spirit lead you to seek for this faith, and with it to find all things necessary for life and salvation.

CALL ON THOUGHTLESS BOYS.

My boys, I have called in to advise you not to play with the long ladder that is against your house yonder. I saw one of you jump from a great height the other day, and you may injure yourselves before you are aware. Bones are broken sooner than they are mended; and accidents are abundant enough as it is, without our wantonly increasing them. I love to see you cheerful and happy, but I do not like to see you in danger. Human life is too short to be trifled with. I will tell you what occurred some time ago, merely through thoughtlessness.

A youth about sixteen years of age, amusing himself on the third floor of one of the large warehouses, thoughtlessly laid hold of an iron crane used to hoist up heavy bales and packages from the street below, and swung backwards and

forwards for some time. Before he was aware, the crane, which was outside the door, wheeled round towards the street, so that the unfortunate youth hung suspended by his hands over the pavement at that fearful height. There happened at the time to be no person in the warehouse, and his cries for assistance were heart-rending. A crowd assembled in the street, expecting every moment to see him dashed to pieces, and several persons called out to him to hold fast till they could come up and assist him. Overcome by exertion and terror, the unhappy young man at last let go of the crane, and fell down. Though severely injured, providentially he was not killed; but he furnished another to the numerous instances on record, wherein thoughtlessness has occasioned the most fearful accidents.

There are a hundred ways, besides swinging on a crane, whereby a boy may draw upon himself a terrible calamity, such as climbing trees and buildings, and venturing upon the deep water in a boat with those who have no skill to manage it. Therefore, leave off thoughtless and dangerous sport, my boys, before some accident befalls you. It would be a hard matter to go limping through life for a moment's pleasure. Be advised, my boys! be advised!

CALL ON ONE CALCULATING ON A LONG LIFE.

Visitor. You were telling me, Baxter, the other day, that your grandfather lived to eighty-three, and your father to eighty-six.

Baxter. Yes; and I feel pretty sure that I shall live as long too; for I am threescore now, and am as hearty as a buck.

Visitor. Ah! Baxter! that is but a poor foundation to build upon, when so many are dying around you. It would be no bad thing if you were to read the "Dying Thoughts," written by a good man who bore your name. Think, for a moment, how short human life is, taking all mankind together.

It is supposed that the world contains a thousand millions of inhabitants; that more than thirty millions die every year; more than eighty-three thousand every day; more than three thousand four hundred every hour; and about fifty-seven every minute: so that the mortality among human beings amounts almost to one every second. In the short time that has passed since I began to speak to you, one hundred immortal souls have passed into an eternal world! What think you of this? Is it not indeed a solemn reflection?

Baxter. Why I cannot believe it!

Visitor. You may not believe it, but it is not the less true on that account. It is a fact that should ring in our ears, and strike heavily on our hearts. Well as you now are, Baxter, if you have passed through threescore years, you must expect infirmities, and for these not to creep, but to leap upon you. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."*

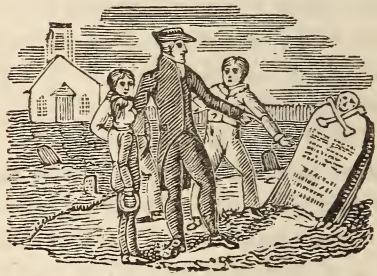
Baxter. Our lives, for the matter of that, are short, sure enough; but for one to die every

* Job xiv. 1, 2.

second of time is the strangest thing that I ever heard of.

Visitor. The thought is enough to impress the most careless. Already another hundred souls have left this world while you and I have been continuing this conversation.

Look about you, Baxter, and prepare!



A CALL ON THE FATHER OF A LARGE FAMILY.

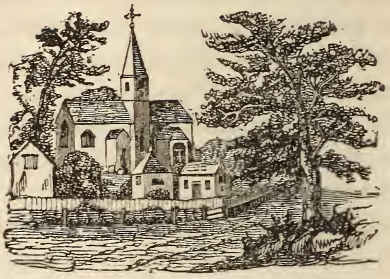
Good day to you, Mr. Jones. Good day to you all, young people; you look as fresh and as clean this morning as I could wish to see you. As times go, Mr. Jones, you must have enough to do to bring up such a family as you have; but there is an old saying, that "when God is pleased to send mouths, he sends also something to put in them." Men with large families, who fear God, do quite as well, so far as I can see, as those who have a fewer number to provide for. One of the most learned ministers of the gospel, who has not long exchanged earth for heaven, thought it quite

a holiday to leave his books and mingle with his children. On these occasions he would cry out to them, "Come all about me! Come all about me!" At the sound of his voice his little ones used to rush forward, striving which should get the first kiss, or the best seat upon his knee. After that they would often clamber about him; one holding him fast around his neck—this he called his collar; two would hang from his shoulders—these were his shoulder-knots; one clasping him round the waist, was his girdle; and one seated on each foot and clinging to his legs, he called his clogs; then taking an infant in his arms, the delighted father hobbled about the room, happier than the happiest of his laughing children!

Now this is, to me, a sweet family picture; and when God-fearing parents and God-fearing children can thus find delight in each other's company, there is a fair prospect that they will not only share pleasure together on earth, but glory in heaven. It is under such circumstances as these that children bid fair to be blessings to their fathers and their mothers, to themselves and to all around them. It is in such cases as these that the words in the 127th Psalm strike us as being full of beauty: "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his re-

ward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies at the gate."

I trust these few words will be an encouragement to you, Mr. Jones, amid the many cares which every one who brings up a large family must feel; for God can multiply his mercies faster than he has multiplied your children. Good day to you all.



A CALL ON THE SON OF A CHRISTIAN PARENT.

Oh! I have found you at last, but not without some trouble, I assure you, George. Three times have I passed up and down the next street, and not a single person could show me where you lived. You live opposite the church, I see. There is an old proverb, "The nearer the church, the further from God;" meaning that some who have the best opportunity of obtaining spiritual knowledge are more neglectful than their neighbours. Your father is a God-fearing man, George, and I know does his best to bring you up in the fear of the Lord. May the blessing of the Most High rest on his endeavours!

The church clock, I see, is somewhat out of repair. I remember reading that Frederick the

Great, king of Prussia, coming to a village church, where the dial-plate of the clock was out of order, declared that his constitution was three times stronger and more durable than hardened iron: "for," said he, "the church clock, by the date, is only twenty-five years old, yet it is worn out; whereas I, who have been equally exposed to the elements, am seventy-five." Poor Frederick, strong as his constitution was, soon after that lay mouldering in the dust. He lived and died an infidel, and no hopeful ray of a glorious immortality brightened up the dark avenue of death when he passed through it. Better is it to be a God-fearing beggar, than a God-denying king!

Perhaps you will sometimes call this remark to remembrance when you look on the church clock. Ah! the hour is striking now! May it never strike unwelcome on a mis-spent hour, but always find you doing the will of your heavenly Father, and trusting for salvation in the merits and atonement of his Son Jesus Christ.

Mind that your father has the book as soon as he comes home, and it will not hurt you to take a peep in it yourself. Good day, George. I shall know where to find you another time.

CALL ON A YOUTH WITH A BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

Visitor. Come, I am glad to catch you at home, Edward, for I have brought you a little present, remembering that it is your birthday.

Nephew. Oh, it is a knife, and a capital one, too; just what I wanted, uncle. I shall so like it, and will keep it, and value it, for your sake.

Visitor. I am not quite certain of that, for I fear many of your birthday presents are thought but little of, and not always used to the best advantage.

You had five invaluable birthday gifts bestowed upon you in your earliest infancy, each of them of greater worth than a king's crown. The gifts that I speak of are your five senses, hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and feeling, given you by the Giver of every good gift. By hearing, you are enabled to understand the thoughts of others, to receive the admonitions of the ministers of the gospel of Christ, and to partake of the pleasure of music, the singing of birds, and the soft murmur of winds and waters.

By seeing, you can read the Bible, receive delight from the beautiful creation which God has made, and avoid many of the dangers by which you are surrounded.

By smelling, you enjoy the grateful scent of flowers, and the balmy breath of the morn; and learn to know what food would be disagreeable to eat.

By tasting, you derive pleasure from the various kinds of sustenance so bountifully provided for you by your heavenly Father; flesh, fish, fowl, and the fruits of the ground and of the trees.

By feeling, you enjoy the grateful warmth of the sun, the accommodation of your clothes, and the delightful freshness communicated by pure water. Feeling also assists you in writing, drawing, and in handling different tools. Now, do you often think of the value of these birthday presents, and of the great goodness of Him who bestowed them upon you?

Nephew. I cannot say that I do; but I hope that what you have said will make me more mindful in future.

Visitor. In addition to these birthday presents, God has given you the goodly gift of reason, to enable you to put the rest to a proper use, and added, also, the glorious gift of his holy word, whereby you are taught the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. If you undervalue these great gifts, it is hardly likely that you will long value the trifling one which I have given you. Bear in mind, Edward, that where much is given much

will be required. If you love God heartily, you will prize his gifts highly; and prove this by employing them in his service. Say to yourself, morning, noon, and night:—

O God of love, and power divine!
My body and my soul are thine;
Thine while I live, thine when I die,—
In time, and through eternity.

CALL ON A YOUNG CRIPPLE.

Michael, I never make a call on you without regretting your infirmity; and yet when I see the thoughtless follies into which too many young people run, and observe your patience and humility, and especially your attention to Divine

things, I cannot help thinking that God has dealt mercifully with you.

To be cut off in youth from the sports and enjoyments in which other young people indulge, appears hard; but if we believe that God has the will and the power to do what is best for all who call on his name, it will reconcile us to our afflictions, as well as add to our enjoyments. We cannot tell why one flower is nipped in the bud, and another permitted to bloom; why one tree is smitten by the lightning, while another stretches forth its branches abroad uninjured. Nor need we afflict ourselves about the matter. If God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son to die for us, we need not doubt that his protecting arms are around us, and his watchful eye over us for good. He will do that which is right for his people. I have heard the cripple on his crutches, and the aged in the midst of infirmity, rejoice that they had been afflicted: and God, who sanctified their afflictions, can abundantly sanctify yours. It is a great blessing, doubtless, to enjoy youth, to join in the buoyant pastimes of light-hearted companions; in the season of recreation to ascend the hill, and roam through the flowery valley, while the healthful breeze is blowing around; but it is a still greater blessing to have the heart drawn by love to magnify the Lord, and the spirit to rejoice in

God our Saviour. Be encouraged, then, Michael; if you are the subject of the grace that sanctifies, and have the good hope of glory, it is better than to have all the health, and all the amusements that ever were enjoyed

CALL ON A TIMID YOUNG MAN.

I HAVE called on you, Meredith, to give you a word of encouragement; for I see that you are too easily cast down. Now, nothing ought to cast down them who fear God. If you meet a little disappointment, it will blow over. If you are

visited with an unexpected trial, be patient, and it will pass away; God knows all about the disappointment, and the trial too.

White snow falls from a dark cloud, and it is in the absence of the sun that the sky is lit up with ten thousand stars. Why, then, should we be faint-hearted and feeble, when we ought to be confident and strong? There is no danger that God cannot deliver us from, no good thing which he cannot bestow. Now, Meredith, think of these things and be encouraged. You were brought up by a Christian father; you have been instructed at a Sunday-school; you have learned to read your Bible, and you have heard the gospel of Christ faithfully proclaimed by his ministers, and should, therefore, never be cast down. The lions were hungry enough, no doubt, when Daniel was thrown into the den among them. The flames were fierce enough when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace. But neither the lions nor the flames did any mischief to the servants of the Lord. Now these things were intended to give courage and confidence to God's people, old and young, in all ages of the world. Let them, then, give courage and confidence to you. He who knows that God hath given his Son Jesus Christ to die for sinners, cannot need any other proof of God's love to him;

and you may depend upon it, those whom God loves are safe enough, not only as it regards this world, but also the world that is to come. Now let me see you a little more cheerful, Meredith, for the future. Consider not your weakness, but the almighty power of your heavenly Father,

> "So strong to deliver, so good to redeem,
> The weakest believer that hangs upon him:"

And then, with God's grace, faint-heartedness will fly away; and hopefulness, and confidence, and joy take up their abode in your bosom.

CALL ON ONE WELL VERSED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

Visitor. I PROMISED to ask you a riddle the next time I saw you, James, and I do it with the more pleasure, because I know that the Scripture dwells richly in you, and I believe that its consolations warm your heart as much as its instructions inform your head; but my riddle is this:—

"A mixture of each sort I am;
A hurtful snake, a harmless lamb;
A tardy ass, a speedy roe;
A lion bold, a timorous doe."

James. Ay, sir, I see clearly enough whereabouts you are; the polluted sinner purified by

the blood of sprinkling is every thing that you have described. He is a mixture sure enough of good and evil, but the good comes not from himself. He is, indeed, a hurtful snake; for his heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,"* his "poison is like the poison of a serpent;" he is "like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear,"† and yet for all this, he is a lamb; for God's children are as lambs in his sight. When our blessed Redeemer commanded Peter to give spiritual food to his people, he said, "Feed my lambs."‡ The believer is a tardy ass, for he is too often wise in his own conceit; and "vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt."§ He is also a speedy roe, when God quickens him in the ways of salvation. I think it is in the Proverbs of Solomon where the words occur, "Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter."‖ You were right when you said he was a lion bold; and he has good reason to be so, for if God be for him, what need has he to fear what man can do against him? "The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion."¶ But though he be so full of courage, yet is he timorous as the doe, for if

* Jer. xvii. 9. † Psa. lviii. 4. ‡ John xxi. 15.
§ Job xi. 12. ‖ Prov. vi. 5. ¶ Prov. xxviii. 1.

God leave him for a moment, he trembles even at the shadow of his own sins. Now, I think, your riddle is made out: if I may be so bold, I will ask one in my turn too.

Visitor. Do, James; I should like to hear it.

James. This, then, sir, is my riddle:

> "Good cause I have still to be sad;
> Good reason always to be glad;
> Hence still my joys with sorrows meet,
> And still my tears are bitter sweet."

Visitor. Ay! ay! James, I have found you out already; your riddle speaks of the same character as my own. You allude to a follower of Christ.

James. You are right, so far; but now you must please to give me the application.

Visitor. In the first place, the true Christian has always reason to be sad on account of his sins, because by them he has dishonoured God, and brought leanness into his own soul. Well may he cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* And yet, for all this, he has abundant reason always to be glad; for his sins are forgiven him, and God has promised to guide him by his counsel, and to bring him to his glory. "Thanks be unto

* Rom. vii. 24.

God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ."* His joys and sorrows are mingled, and will be so as long as he is in this imperfect state; he is, therefore, described in the Epistle to the Corinthians "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."† It is true, that his tears, however bitter they may be, are bitter sweet to him, for "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy,"‡ and "blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."§

James. Come, sir, you are even with me, for my riddle is fully answered.

Visitor. I scarcely expected to puzzle you. He who knows the bitterness of sin is wise; but he who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and that his sins are forgiven, is a great deal wiser. As God in mercy has communicated this double knowledge to your soul, you have reason to be doubly thankful.

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* Cor. ii. 14.
† 2 Cor. vi. 10.
‡ Ps. cxxvi. 5.
§ Matt. v. 4.

CALL ON ONE WITH A GOOD MEMORY.

HERE, Samuel, try if you can learn these verses by heart, for they please me so much, that I want to get them into the heads and hearts of all my young friends. I have heard you repeat many a pretty piece. Add this to the number of those you know; and some day or other I will call in, and hear if you can say it perfectly.

"Two paths there are through which all mortals go,
This leads to bliss, and that to endless wo:
The way that leads to misery is broad,
A smooth, a pleasing, and a flowery road;
With company 'tis crowded everywhere,
The rich, the gay, the witty, and the fair.
Ah! fondly-blinded, whither will they run?
Why in such headlong haste to be undone?
See how they press death's ample gate to win!
How heedless of the flames that glare within!

There is another unfrequented way,
That leads to life, and love, and endless day;
Its straight and thorny path, as on you go,
Will every moment more delightful grow;
To tread this narrow road no labour spare,
For heaven, and holy souls, and God himself is there."

You have a good memory; I hope, then, that you do not forget that time is short and eternity long, that death and judgment are certain; that all are sinners, and that Jesus Christ is a Saviour. Happy they, who, bearing these things in mind, are led by God's grace to him who "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him."*

* Heb. vii. 25.

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